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# THE IDEA OF GOD
# IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF
# ST. AUGUSTINE

# THE IDEA OF GOD IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF ST. AUGUSTINE

By

WILLIAM PEARSON TOLLEY

LIBRARY OF PRINCETO
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To

R. C. T.

# PREFACE

FEW men have more profoundly influenced the history of western thought than has Augustine. For more than a thousand years he enjoyed a preëminence in philosophy that was shared only by Aristotle and it is he perhaps more than any other one person who is responsible for the doctrinal formulation of Christian beliefs. Augustine is not only the greatest of the Church Fathers and the Prince of Theologians, but he is also a philosopher of the first rank who fused the finest elements of Greek and Roman thought into a great and enduring synthesis.

In this synthesis the central and unifying principle is God. God is the ground of all existence, the source of all knowledge, the giver of all goodness. Since the world was created in the image of the eternal forms, any investigation of the nature of the world must begin with an attempt to understand the nature of these unchanging forms in the mind of him who alone truly is. Since without his illumination there can be no true knowledge, every discussion of the problems of epistemology must turn about him who is the light of all minds and the eternal and unchangeable truth. Again, since without his grace there can be neither faith nor goodness, every discussion of ethical problems must revolve about him who is the perfect goodness, and the knowledge and possession of whom is man's highest good.

In other words, all reflection leads back to God and all philosophy ends in theology. The three divisions of philosophy observed by the Platonists, namely, physics, logic and ethics, become three aspects of the one ineffable and immutable God which in the Christian doctrine of the trinity are the persons Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

A study of Augustine's idea of God brings us, therefore, to the very heart of the Augustinian system and provides a natural introduction to the study of his philosophy. The purpose of this present work is, however, not so much to offer a detailed exposition of every part of Augustine's thought as to indicate the central importance of the idea of God in his philosophy.

In doing this it seemed advisable to trace the development of his idea of God to learn when the first clear outlines could be discerned. Finding that the climax of this development had been reached by the time of his conversion to Christianity, it was decided that in view of the controversy concerning the course of Augustine's intellectual evolution it would be both interesting and profitable to compare the earliest of his extant works, the Cassiciacum Dialogues, with those of his more mature years.

This comparison shows that, contrary to the opinion of many scholars, the complete framework of Augustine's philosophy may be seen even in these first works, and that the later writings disclose only minor and relatively insignificant modifications of thought. The comparison also serves to emphasize the importance of the Cassiciacum Dialogues, especially in the field of philosophy, and indicates that the early writings of Augustine which have been so frequently ignored, and the majority of which are still not to be found in an English translation, do not suffer by comparison with the later works.

It will be evident to the reader that in the exposition of Augustine's idea of God the author rejects the interpretation of Malebranche and others that Augustine taught the doctrine of ontologism, i.e., a direct knowledge of the essence of God.

The author would like to take this opportunity to express his deep sense of obligation to Professor Richard P. McKeon of Columbia University for his many helpful suggestions and his friendly, illuminating criticism.

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# THE IDEA OF GOD IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF ST. AUGUSTINE

# THE IDEA OF GOD IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF SAINT AUGUSTINE

## CHAPTER I

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF AUGUSTINE'S IDEA OF GOD

THE philosophy of Augustine rests on two fundamental convictions, first, that God exists, and second, that he is man's highest good. While Augustine believed that both propositions are rationally defensible, they are nevertheless presuppositions assumed rather than conclusions logically proved.

Augustine never doubted the truth of these assumptions. From his nineteenth year, when he became enflamed with a life-long passion for wisdom, he appears to have identified truth and wisdom with God and to have believed that possession of the divine wisdom is life's *summum bonum*. His conception of God, however, underwent many changes, and since his philosophy is essentially a chain of deductions from his definition of God, an understanding of the evolution of his idea of God is perhaps the best key to a knowledge of the development of his philosophy.

Augustine was born at Thagaste in North Africa, not far from Carthage, in 354. His father, Patricius, was a pagan but his mother, Monnica [1] was a devoted Christian. As his religious instruction was under the direction of his mother, Augustine was enrolled as a Christian Catechumen by the purificatory rite of being "sealed with the mark of His cross and salted with His salt." [2] While his salvation was a matter of deep concern, his baptism was postponed, despite his desire for it, on the ground that "the defilements of sin would, after that washing, bring greater and more perilous guilt." [3] Once, however, he was seriously ill and would have been baptized, despite his youth, had he not suddenly recovered.[4]

That Monnica made an earnest effort to bring up her son within the fold of the Catholic Christian Church we know from his repeated testimony. "The seeds of the truest religion," he tells us, "were salubriously placed in me from childhood." [5] He accepted without question the teaching of the church and even as a small boy was familiar with the great Christian doctrines, including that "of an eternal life, promised us through the humility of the Lord our God stooping to our pride." [1] That he shared the naive and uncritical religious views of Monnica we may be quite sure, for he confesses that his first thought of God was of an anthropological being, "some Great One, who while concealed from our senses, could hear and help us." [2] On the other hand, he early learned that this benevolent spirit did not answer all prayers. How disillusioning an experience this was we have no way of knowing, but the vivid memory of the incident is apparent from his own words, recorded some thirty years later. "For so I began, as a boy," he says, "to pray to Thee, my aid and refuge; and broke the fetters of my tongue to call on Thee, praying Thee, though small, yet with no small earnestness, that I might not be beaten at school. And when Thou heardest me not . . . my very parents . . . mocked my stripes, my then great and grievous ill." [3]

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[1] Not *Monica.* Cf. "Patricii conjux nomine Monnica (sic enim ejus nomen ubique in antiquis codicibus pingebant librarii)." Vita Sancti Aurelii Augustine in Migne Patrologiae Patrum Latinorum. Vol. XXXII, col. 66.

[2] Conf. I, XI, 17.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid.

[5] De duabus animabus contra Man. I, 1. Cf. De util. cred. I, 2 and Contra Acad. II, II, 5.

The first significant step in the development of his idea of God occurred in his nineteenth year, when in the study of various books on eloquence, he fell upon a work of Cicero, since lost, which was called *Hortensius.* The reading of this book altered the interest which Augustine had developed in worldly pleasures, gave him new desires and purposes, and turned his prayers to a God now for the first time clearly identified with Truth and Wisdom. [4] He resolved at once "to love, and seek and obtain, and hold, and embrace not this or that sect, but wisdom itself whatever it were." [1]

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[1] Conf. I, XI, 17.

[2] Ibid I, IX, 14.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid III, IV, 7.

The *Hortensius* was, however, an exhortation to the study of pagan philosophy. Augustine was still at least partly Christian, and his conscience was bothered by the absence of the name of Christ in the work which had kindled such a flame in his heart.[2] Because of this, and also because the *Hortensius* constituted for him a call to religious as well as philosophical inquiry he immediately determined to study the Christian Scriptures.[3] This inquiry he conducted alone, feeling no need at this time for maternal or priestly guidance. Unfortunately, the translations of the Scriptures that were available did not compare in style with "the stateliness of Tully," a fact that Augustine was too much of a rhetorician to overlook. "My swelling pride," he tells us, "shrank from their lowliness, nor could my sharp wit pierce the interior thereof." [4] While like all young men swollen with new wisdom he was more than a little arrogant and critical, he was at the same time sincerely searching for truth, and he found the Bible, and particularly the Old Testament, not only inferior in style but also in matter, and full of things to be despised "as old wives' fables." [5]

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[1] Conf. III, IV, 8; De beata vita I, 4.
[2] Ibid. [3] Ibid III, V, 9. [4] Ibid.
[5] De util. cred. I, 2; Conf. III, VII-X, 13-18.

The Manichees, who made a show of learning and talked much of Truth, found in Augustine a willing and apt pupil. Their charge that the Catholic Christians were terrified by superstition appeared to have some foundation and their method of leading men to God by the plain and simple way of reason as opposed to the Catholic insistence that faith must precede reason, greatly appealed to him.[1] Soon, therefore, he enrolled in the class of "Auditores" and became an eager and enthusiastic apologist for that sect, winning as converts many of his intimate friends. He apparently had no desire, however, to resign "the hope and business of this world" by becoming one of the Elect, being quite content to remain in the lower rank of Auditor.[2]

As a Manichee Augustine accepted as true the conception of God as "One who has parts extended in length and breadth . . . whose being was bulk." [3] He now thought of the world as a mixture of two eternal principles or substances, the one good and light and the other evil and dark. He probably also subscribed to the Manichaean view that the Old Testament was the work of the Devil and that the body of Jesus was but a phantom and his crucifixion an appearance. He did not, however, assent to all the Manichaean doctrines. Despite his satisfaction with the system as a whole he found much that he could not accept as literally true. He tells us that he regarded many of the doctrines as the outer wrappings of some hidden truth which would some day be disclosed to him.[1]

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[1] De util. cred. I, 2. Cf. Conf. III, VI, 10 and Contra epist. Man. quam voc. fund. IV, 5.

The attractions of Manichaeism for Augustine are well summarized by T. R. Glover, Life and Letters in the Fourth Century, pp. 202-203. Reprint, New York, 1924. Cf. Robert L. Ottley, Studies in the Confessions of St. Augustine, p. 46. London, 1919.

[2] Ibid I, 2.

[3] Conf. III, VII, 12.

The problem of evil was Augustine's greatest intellectual, and perhaps also his greatest personal problem at this time.[2] The Manichaean solution was both plausible and pleasing, for its dualism not only relieved God of all responsibility for evil in man and in nature [3] but also relieved Augustine of personal responsibility for the evil impulses which he found within himself and against which he seemed to struggle in vain.[4] On the other hand, he was never fully convinced that he had found Truth or had come to know God. Like the *Hortensius* and the Christian Scriptures, the Manichaean system left his religious instinct unsatisfied. He fed on the things which the Manichees offered to him as divine, but "not eagerly," for as he expressed it, "Thou didst not in them taste to me as Thou art; for Thou wast not these emptinesses, nor was I nourished by them, but exhausted rather."[1] Already he was finding it impossible to take the Manichaean view of God as literally true. When he thought of God it was not "any solid or substantial thing." At the same time he had as yet no conception of God as spirit: "Thou wert not Thyself, but a mere phantom, and my error was my God."[2]

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[1] De beata vita I, 4. Cf. Conf. V, V-VI, 9 and 10; VI, XI, 18; and VIII, VII, 17; De moribus Man. VIII, 11; and De util. cred. VIII, 20.

[2] De lib. arb. I, II, 4.

[3] Conf. VII, XIV, 20 and V, X, 20.

[4] Ibid V, X, 18.

It is evident that the *a priori* temper of Augustine's mind was gradually drawing him from dualism to monism, despite his continued adherence to the Manichaean sect. In a reference to his lost work, *De pulchro et apto,* written during this period, there is a suggestion that we love nothing but the beautiful which "attracts and wins us to the things we love," and without which things "could by no means draw us unto them." There is also the further suggestion that one beauty in bodies is "from their forming a sort of whole, and again, another from apt and mutual correspondence, as of a part of the body with its whole, or a shoe with a foot, and the like."[3] It is just possible that even at this period Augustine had reached a conception of the unity of the whole universe through beauty, the universal beauty which is God. Even if this final step had not yet been taken, the work gives positive evidence of the direction of Augustine's thought and of the increasing fascination that beauty, order and unity had for him.

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[1] Conf. III, VI, 10.
[2] Ibid IV, VII, 12. Cf. III, VII, 12.
[3] Ibid IV, XIII, 20.

He had, however, not yet learned to think of incorporeal forms. The *Categoriae* of Aristotle, which he read at twenty, seemed to him to speak very clearly of substances,[1] and therefore the authority of Aristotle appeared to confirm the Manichaean views he had then adopted. God was conceived as a vast and bright body and man a fragment of that body.[2] Beauty was a form of body, Wisdom a knowledge of corporeal substances, and Evil an irrational substance.[3] As opposed to Evil, in which a sort of division could be observed, Virtue and Truth were each defined as a kind of substantial unity. Man's soul, which he regarded as the "chief and unchangeable good" was also defined in the same way.[4]

Although many of these definitions pleased him he was not satisfied with his conception of God. "It seemed to me very unseemly," he says, "to believe Thee to have the shape of human flesh and to be bounded by the bodily lineaments of our members." While he declares that he did not know how to define God except as "a mass of bodies," since what was not a body was nothing,[5] he does say that he felt it more reverent to believe God to be unbounded, except on the side where the mass of evil was op-

[1] Conf. IV, XVI, 28.

[2] Ibid IV, XVI, 31.

[3] Ibid IV, XV, 24.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid V, X, 20.

posed to him, than to think of him as bounded on all sides by the form of a human body.[1]

In struggling unassisted toward a conception of God as spirit, Augustine was also trying to ascertain the true meaning of the Manichaean mysteries. While reluctant to brand the whole system as false, he had already discovered the fraudulent character of the Manichaean astrology and he had reason to suspect the Manichaean physics.[2] His allegiance did not, however, approach the breaking point until the long-heralded Faustus, a Bishop of the Manichees and their ablest apologist, failed utterly to answer the questions or resolve the doubts that had perplexed him for some nine years.[3] Nevertheless, even though now thoroughly disillusioned, Augustine continued to keep on friendly terms with the Manichaean leaders and did not disturb his status as an Auditor.

His unwillingness to desert Manichaeism may have been due to personal ambition but it is more likely to have been the force of inertia. Augustine himself suggests that it was because of his satisfaction with the Manichaean treatment of the problem of evil. "I still thought," he says in his Confessions, "that it was not we that sin . . . and it delighted my pride, to be free from blame; and when I had done any evil, not to confess I had done any . . . but . . . to accuse I know not what other thing, which was with me, but which I was not."[1] In any case, despite strong leanings toward Academic skepticism, he "resolved to rest contented" in the Manichaean faith until such time as a better could be found.[2]

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[1] Conf. V, X, 20.

[2] Ibid V, III, 6; VII, V, 8-9; Contra epist. Man. quam voc. fund. XV, 19. Cf. Contra Faustum Man. II, 5.

[3] Ibid V, VI-VII, 10-13; De util. cred. VIII, 20.

In the meantime, the Scriptures, which for years had been a stumbling-block in Augustine's return to Christianity, were beginning to take on a new significance. The arguments of Helpidius in behalf of the Old and New Testaments impressed Augustine even while he was still at Carthage, and the Manichaean answers seemed to him to be evasive and unconvincing.[3] It was not, however, until Augustine went to Milan in 385 and there heard the sermons of the Christian Bishop Ambrose that his distrust of the Bible was dispelled. The allegorical interpretation of Old Testament passages, indulged in freely by Ambrose, removed his former objections. After listening to the Bishop of Milan he tells us, "the Catholic cause seemed to me in such sort not vanquished, as still not as yet to be victorious."[4]

Living now in a Christian community, he at last disavowed his membership in the Manichaean sect and determined "so long to be a Catechumen in the Catholic Church, to which I had been commended by my parents, till something certain should dawn upon me, whither I might steer my course."[1]

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[1] Conf. V, X, 18.

[2] Ibid V, X, 19.

[3] Ibid V, II, 21.

[4] Ibid V, XIV, 24.

Augustine was not yet entirely free from Manichaean views concerning God, but he had at least ceased to think of him under the figure of a human body. In his heart, he now (about his thirty-first year) believed God to be incorruptible, uninjurable, and unchangeable, "because though not knowing whence or how, yet I saw plainly and was sure, that that which may be corrupted, must be inferior to that which cannot."[2] Yet he still thought of God "as being in space, whether infused into the world or diffused."[3]

Holding firmly to God's immanence in the world, Augustine conceived of him as a being "as vast, through infinite spaces, on every side penetrating the whole mass of the universe, and beyond it, every way, through immeasurable boundless spaces; so that the earth should have Thee, the heavens have Thee, all things have Thee, and they be bounded in Thee, and Thou bounded no where."[4]

The contradiction between this vast corporeal substance and a genuinely immutable and incorruptible being was apparent to Augustine but he saw no way to resolve it. He remembered the question that his friend Nebridius had delighted in asking the

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[1] Conf. V, XIV, 25. Cf. De util. cred. VIII, 20.

[2] Ibid VII, I, 1.

[3] Ibid VII, I, 1.

[4] Ibid VII, I, 2. Cf. VII, V, 7.

Manichees, namely, "Suppose God had refused to contend again the forces of evil, could they have injured him?" If the question were answered in the affirmative, it indicated that God was subject to injury and therefore not incorruptible, an intolerable position for Augustine. If, on the other hand, it were answered in the negative, it made any strife between "light" and "darkness" unnecessary and therefore reduced the whole Manichaean system to an absurdity.[1]

As a loyal Manichee the question of Nebridius had greatly perplexed Augustine and now that he was thinking his way to new conceptions it returned to trouble him, for it raised the whole question of God's relation to evil. Among the possible solutions to the problem was the doctrine that free will was the cause of man's doing evil and the just judgment of God the cause of man's suffering evil. He found it difficult, however, to understand this, or at least to accept it as the true explanation.[2]

Already he was following his usual method of deduction from an accepted definition of God. He now believed God to be a vast substance, perfectly good, incorruptible, immutable, undefilable, and the creator of all beings and all things.[3] Since the universe was created by a perfectly good God it too must have been created good, although a lesser good. Whence then is evil? If evil is real, and he believed that it was, either God is good but not omnipotent or omnipotent but not good. Since, however, we must believe that God is good it follows that he must not be omnipotent. This conclusion did not please Augustine and he endeavored vainly to find a different answer.[1]

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[1] Conf. VII, II, 3. Cf. T. R. Glover, Life and Letters of the Fourth Century, p. 206.

[2] Ibid VII, III, 5.

[3] Ibid VII, III, 4.

The solution of this and other problems appeared in certain Latin translations of the Neoplatonists,[2] where for the first time Augustine learned that evil might be explained as a privation of good rather than as a substance opposed to goodness.[3] From these books, as well as from the sermons of Ambrose and Theodorus, he also arrived at a notion of spirit and came to think of God and of the soul as incorporeal.[4] He now realized that the doctrine of Christ as the Word and Wisdom of God was philosophically tenable and he was so profoundly moved by the Neoplatonic writings that he almost burned his bridges behind him and embraced Christianity at once.[5]

He had at last proved to his own satisfaction that God is both omnipotent and good. He had also definitely rejected polytheism[1] and the dualism of the Manichaeans. God is no longer thought of as any "ordinary light which all flesh may look upon nor as it were a greater of the same kind, as though the brightness of this should be manifold brighter, and with its greatness, take up all space." Rather is he the Light Unchangeable that is to be beheld only "with the eye of my soul, . . . above the same eye of my soul, above my mind . . . He that knows the Truth, knows what that Light is; and he that knows It, knows eternity."[2] He is pure being, the "I am that I am" of the Old Testament, compared with which the created things "neither altogether are, nor altogether are not, for they are, since they are from Thee, but are not, because they are not, what Thou art. For that truly is which remains unchangeably."[3]

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[1] Conf. VII, V, 7.

[2] These were probably the Book of Amelius the Platonist and a translation of the Enneads of Plotinus by the Christian Victorinus. Cf. Ibid VII, IX, 13; VIII, II, 3.

[3] Ibid VII, XII, 18.

[4] De beata vita I, 4.

[5] Ibid. Cf. Contra Acad. II, II, 5; and Conf. VII, IX-XX, 13-26.

Having turned from dualism to monism Augustine now believed that God is the creator of all that exists and that all that exists is good. The evil which he had been seeking is no substance, "for were it a substance, it should be good. For either it should be an incorruptible substance, and so a chief good: or a corruptible substance; which unless it were good, could not be corrupted."[4] On the other hand, he recognized that God while making all things good did not create all things equal.[5] There are various grades of goodness but no real evil. Augustine declares that to God there "is nothing whatsoever evil: yea, not only to Thee, but also to Thy creation as a whole, because there is nothing without, which may break in, and corrupt that order which Thou hast appointed it. But in the parts thereof some things because unharmonizing with other some, are accounted evil: whereas those very things harmonize with others, and are good, and in themselves are good." [1] All the so-called natural evils, cyclones, fire, cold, volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, etc., are explained in the same manner, that is, they have only an appearance of a lack of harmony; actually all these things are good and, viewed as a whole, are in perfect harmony with the rest of creation.[2] Moral evil is also explained as of no substance but "the perversion of the will, turned aside from Thee, O God, the Supreme, toward these lower things, and casting out its bowels, and puffed up outwardly." [3]

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[1] Conf. VII, IX, 15.

[2] Ibid VII, X, 16.

[3] Ibid VII, XI, 17.

[4] Ibid VII, XII, 18.

[5] Ibid.

God created and sustains this good world which he has created. He is everywhere in it but is not to be confused with it. All things owe their being to God and are bounded in him, not, however, as in space, but because contained in his truth. Again, all things are true in so far as they exist and there is no falsehood in this sense except when that is thought to be which is not.[4]

[1] Conf. VII, XII, 19.

[2] Ibid XII, XIII-XVI, 19-22.

[3] Ibid VII, XVI, 22.

[4] Ibid VII, XV, 21.

The idea of God was now well developed. All that Augustine needed to make his God that of Christianity was belief in the incarnation and redeeming power of Christ and the equality and indivisibility of the three persons in the Christian trinity. He had, as a Manichee, recognized the Saviourhood of Christ in a limited sense. He tells us that he imagined the Saviour, the only begotten of God, "to have been projected, as it were, for our salvation, out of the mass of Thy most lucid substance." [1] He subscribed to the docetic view of Christ's body, holding that the Son of God could not have been born of Mary without defilement by contact with matter. Now, however, that he had left Manichaeism behind him, he came to think of Christ "as of a man of excellent wisdom, whom no one could be equalled unto, especially, for that being wonderfully born of a Virgin, He seemed, in conformity therewith, through the Divine care for us, to have attained that great eminence of authority, for an ensample of despising things temporal for the obtaining of immortality." [2] He also believed in the existence of the Logos or Word of which the Neoplatonists spoke. He did not, however, recognize Christ as the only way to a satisfying knowledge of God, and it remained a mystery to him how the Word of God could really be made flesh.

To clear up this mystery and to learn more of the God of whose existence and nature he was assured while yet too unsure to enjoy,[1] Augustine turned for the second time to a study of the Christian Scriptures, particularly to the writings of Paul. This time he found an answer to most of his questions and after exchanging his pride for humility acquired a measure of faith in the doctrines he had so long doubted. His actual conversion to Christianity came later, but from now on the idea of God which is the presupposition of his philosophical and theological works suffers no serious change. It is, of course, gradually enriched by the introduction of specific doctrinal elements, but essentially the idea of God reached by Augustine after reading the works of the Neoplatonists and the epistles of Paul is the idea of God of the later Augustine, Bishop of Hippo.

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[1] Conf. V, X, 20.

[2] Ibid VII, XIX, 25.

The long controversy concerning the date of Augustine's complete conversion to Christianity need not concern us particularly. The character of the controversy and the position here taken might, however, be noted. The dispute concerns the historical accuracy of the Confessions in recording the evolution of Augustine's thought and the nature of his conversion. According to the Confessions Augustine was converted to orthodox Christianity in the year 386 and was baptized by Ambrose at Easter, 387. The completeness of this conversion is, however, doubted by many scholars. Gaston Boissier,[1] for example, calls attention to the general differences of color between the Confessions, written from 396 to 400, and the Cassiciacum Dialogues, written at the country villa of Verecundus in the fall and winter of 386-387, and contrasts the penitent sinner of the garden experience depicted in the Confessions, with the placid philosopher revealed in the Dialogues that were written just a few months after this experience. Harnack [2] makes a similar observation and suggests that it is not difficult, if one compares the Confessions with the Dialogues, to show that Augustine contradicts himself. Friedrich Loofs,[3] Louis Gourdon,[4] Hans Becker,[5] Wilhelm Thimme,[6] and Prosper Alfaric [7] all go even farther in insisting that the evolution of Augustine has followed a course quite different from that which is described in the Confessions. Alfaric, for example, declares that the conversion of Augustine in 386 was to Neoplatonism only and that Augustine did not become a fully orthodox Christian until much later, perhaps as late as 400.[1] The early works of Augustine are to be regarded, therefore, as books written by a disciple of Plotinus, who with the passing of the years becomes more and more Christian.

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[1] Conf. VII, XIX, 25.

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[1] La conversion de saint Augustin. Gaston Boissier. Revue des Deux-Mondes. January 1, 1888. Also reprinted in his La Fin du Paganisme. Hachette, Paris. 8th ed. Vol. I, pp. 291-325.

[2] "So ist es nicht schwer, Augustin aus Augustin zu widerlegen." Augustin's Confessionem. Adolph Harnack. 2 auflag., Giessen, 1895. p. 17.

[3] Article Augustinus by Friedrich Loofs in the Realencyclopädie für prot. Stud. 3rd ed. Leipzig, 1897. Also, Leitfaden zum Studium der Dogmengeschichte, Halle, 1906. pp. 348 and 351.

[4] Essai sur la conversion de saint Augustin. Louis Gourdon. Cahors, 1900.

[5] Augustin, Studien zu seiner geistigen Entwickelung. Hans Becker. Leipzig, 1908.

[6] Augustins geistige Entwickelung in den ersten Jahren nach seiner "Bekehrung." Wilhelm Thimme. Berlin, 1908. pp. 386-391.

[7] L'évolution intellectuelle de saint Augustin; I. Du Manichéisme au Néoplatonisme. Prosper Alfaric. Paris, 1918.

Opposing this view, there are almost as many students of Augustine who affirm their confidence in the Confessions as a reliable record of Augustine's intellectual and spiritual history and insist that the inspiration of the early Dialogues is as Christian as that of the Confessions. These writers include among others Fr. Worter,[2] Abbé Jules Martin,[3] Father Eugène Portalié,[4] Louis de Mondadon,[5] William

[1] "Ainsi nous sommes amenés à le considérer bien moins comme un catéchumène presque uniquement occupé de l'idéal chrétien que comme un disciple de Plotin avant tout soucieux de conformer sa vie à la doctrine du Maître. Moralement comme intellectuellement c'est au Néoplatonisme qu'il s'est converti, plutôt qu'à l'Évangile." L'évolution intellectuelle de saint Augustin. p. 399.

[2] Die Geistesentwickelung des heiligen Aurelius Augustinus, bis zu seiner Taufe. Fr. Worter. Paderborn, 1892. pp. 64-66.

[3] Article by Jules Martin, Saint Augustin à Cassiciacum, veille et lendemain d'une conversion, in the Annales de philosophie chrétienne. Dec. 1898. p. 307. See also his Saint Augustin. 2nd ed. Paris, 1923. pp. 7-31.

[4] Article by Eugène Portalié, Augustin (saint), in the Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique. Vol. I, col. 2273-2274. Paris, 1903.

[5] Études (du 20 mai et du 5 juin 1909) : Les premières impressions catholiques de saint Augustin. Louis de Mondadon.

Montgomery,[1] Adolphe Hatzfeld,[2] Th. Bret,[3] Count George von Hertling,[4] Joseph Mausbach,[5] Johannes Hessen,[6] Charles Boyer,[7] Étienne Gilson[8] and Pierre de Labriolle.[9] Boyer also includes Louis Bertrand[10] in this group despite the several concessions he makes to the opposing view.

While the controversy involves a real problem, it has been prolonged and intensified in part from the failure of each scholar to define accurately his terms.

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[1] St. Augustine, Aspects of His Life and Thought. William Montgomery. London, 1914. II. His conversion. pp. 32-66.

[2] Saint Augustin. Adolphe Hatzfeld. Paris, 1898.

[3] La conversion de saint Augustin. Th. Bret. Genève, 1900. p. 8.

[4] Augustin. Count George von Hertling. Mainz, 1902. p. 34.

[5] Die Ethik des heiligen Augustinus. Joseph Mausbach. Freiburg im Breisgau, 1909. Vol. I, pp. 6-16.

[6] Die Begründung der Erkenntnis nach dem heiligen Augustinus. Johannes Hessen. Münster, 1916. (Beiträge Baümker) p. 3. See also his introductory chapter on Augustinus vom Seligen Leben. Leipzig, 1923.

[7] Christianisme et Néo-Platonisme dans la Formation de Saint Augustin. Charles Boyer. Paris, 1920. An excellent account of the controversy from Jean Pherepon (Jean Le Clerc, 1657-1736) to Alfaric will be found on pp. 2-7. See also Boyer's L'Idée de Vérité dans la philosophie de Saint Augustin. Paris, 1920.

[8] Introduction a l'Étude de Saint Augustin. Étienne Gilson. Paris, 1929.

[9] Saint Augustin, Les Confessions, Text établi et traduit par Pierre de Labriolle, Paris, 1925. Volume I, pp. XII-XXII. de Labriolle admits that certain minor errors might creep into a work describing experiences that happened twelve or more years before but he adds, "Mais, en fait, il ne semble pas que le gros effort dirigé contre les Confessions ait réussi à en disqualifier ou a en compromettre sensiblement l'autorité." Introduction, Volume I, p. XIV.

[10] Saint Augustin. Louis Bertrand. Paris, 1913.

There is, for example, no question but that the famous Garden experience took place in 386 or that Augustine was baptized at Easter in 387 together with his friend Alypius and his son Adeodatus. There is no dispute concerning the date of his resignation from the Chair of Rhetoric at Milan, although there is an honest difference of opinion as to what part his conversion played in causing the resignation. There is also a difference of opinion as to what is implied by the *philosophia* to which Augustine now devoted himself with such enthusiasm.[1] On the other hand, there is general if not unanimous agreement that Monnica believed her son's conversion to be genuine and died a year after the conversion, convinced that all her hopes as a Christian mother had been fulfilled.[2] It must also be conceded that Augustine made no attempt in the Confessions to give an absolutely full report of his experiences after his conversion, but rather, recognizing his conversion as the climax of his spiritual development, summarized and abridged the remainder of the story.[1] Last of all, there should be common recognition that the general tone of the Confessions as a document dedicated and addressed to God would necessarily differ from the tone of a dialogue against the Academic

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[1] "Nam cum stomachi dolor scholam me deserere coegisset, qui jam, ut scis, etiam sine ulla tali necessitate in philosophiam confugere moliebar." De ordine I, II, 5. Cf. Contra Acad. I, 1, 3; and De beata vita I, 4. The first letters of Augustine are of importance in determining the meaning of *philosophia.* All are concerned with questions of philosophy, yet Nebridius, writing to Augustine in Thagaste (388 A.D.) says, "Nullusne tibi est amicorum, qui eis amores referat tuos? . . . Me certe audiant. Ego clamabo, ego testabor te Deum amare, illi servire atque inhaerere cupere." Epist. V. Again, Augustine writes to Nebridius, "Illae (the letters of Nebridius) mihi Christum, illae Platonem, illae Plotinum sonabunt." Epist. VI. While we may be sure that *philosophia* is not in Augustine's mind a synonym for Christianity it is evident both from the letters and from the dialogues that the word does not have any anti-Christian or un-Christian connotation.

[2] At Ostia five days before her death, Monnica said to Augustine, "Fili, quantum ad me attinet, nulla jam re delector in hac vita. Quid hic faciam adhuc, et cur hic sim, nescio, jam con-

sumpta spe huius saeculi. Unum erat propter quod in hac vita aliquantum immorari cupiebam, ut te christianum catholicum viderem, priusquam morerer. Cumulatius hoc mihi Deus meus praestitit, ut te etiam, contempta felicitate terrena, servum ejus videam: quid hic facio?" Conf. IX, X, 26. It is difficult to understand how Alfaric can insist that even these words cannot be trusted. (Cf. L'évolution intellectuelle de Saint Augustine, pp. 391, 394-395.) Surely if Augustine remembered anything accurately it would be a scene like this.

[1] "et benedicebam tibi gaudens, profectur in villam cum meis omnibus. Ibi (at Cassiciacum) quid egerim in litteris, jam quidem serventibus tibi, sed adhuc superbiae scholam, tanquam in pausatione anhelantibus, testantur libri disputati cum praesentibus (the Dialogues) et cum ipso me solo coram te (the Soliloquiorum): quae autem cum absente Nebridio, testantur epistolae. Et quando mihi sufficiat tempus commemorandi omnia magna ergo nos beneficia tua in illo tempore, praesertim ad alia majora properanti?" Ibid IX, IV, 7. This is the only reference to the philosophical works written at Cassiciacum. He does, however, devote several pages (Ibid IX, IV, 7-12) to his religious experiences at the villa of Verecundus. This tends to emphasize the religious and to minimize the philosophical side of his Cassiciacum life. It is this "exaggeration" on which certain critics have pounced. It needs to be remembered, however, that Augustine's purpose in writing the Confessions is religious and not philosophical. It would be natural, therefore, for him to refer only casually to works still extant and accessible to all interested readers, and to devote considerable space to a statement of his religious experience.

philosophers, or a philosophical discussion among friends on the place and significance of order in the universe or the nature of the happy life.[1] That any philosophical discussion would be Neoplatonic in character goes without saying since it was this philosophy which he had studied so carefully and which had been so largely responsible for his return to Christianity.

If these things are admitted the dispute now reduces itself essentially to the question whether the theological outlook of the young convert is exactly the same as that of the seasoned leader of orthodoxy of twenty years later. This it seems to the writer can be answered in the negative without impugning in the least the historical accuracy of the Confessions. The theological formulation of Augustine's faith, together with his theological vocabulary, was bound to change somewhat with the passing years. Dogmas in which he evinced only a passing interest as a convert became of increasing importance as he gave more and more time to the study of Christian doctrine. Again, articles of belief were more clearly stated and more carefully developed as he devoted more time to their study. Even in the study of philosophy his interest was bound to change, with certain problems taking on new significance and others ceasing to be of primary importance.

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[1] The Soliloquies offer a better basis for comparison, since their purpose is more nearly that of the Confessions.

The position of the writer is that there is no serious contradiction between the Confessions and the Dialogues. The Neoplatonic character of the Dialogues is conceded, but their Christian character is also defended. The assertion of Alfaric that "morally as well as intellectually it was to Neoplatonism rather than to the Gospels" [1] that Augustine was converted, can be made convincing only by insisting that the references in the Dialogues to prayer, Christ, the Trinity, and Christian authority do not mean what they say. Again, to argue with Gourdon that because of differences of tone and emphasis between the Confessions and the Dialogues "we are in the presence of two different conversions and two different men" [2] is to overlook the difference in purpose of the contrasted works and to imply that a genuine convert to Christianity would have neither the time nor the inclination to write books of philosophy. This, however, is to beg the question, for certainly the terms Christian and philosopher are not necessarily mutually self-excluding.

On the other hand, to believe in the essential agreement between the Confessions and the Dialogues one need not deny that there are minor modifications of doctrine and thought. The nature and comparative unimportance of these changes may be best appreciated by examining the Cassiciacum Dialogues before studying the works of Augustine as a whole.

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[1] Cf. p. 19, note 1.

[2] L. Gourdon, Essai sur la conversion de saint Augustin. Cahors, 1900, p. 45.

# CHAPTER II

## AN ANALYSIS OF THE CASSICIACUM DIALOGUES

After his conversion in 386 A.D. Augustine resolved to resign his Chair of Rhetoric at Milan and devote himself to the study of philosophy.[1] As he would soon be entitled to the vintage time vacation he deferred his resignation until that time and, to prevent unnecessary talk, made no public announcement of his conversion, ascribing his resignation to the state of his health.[2] Having brought his professorial work to a close he retired to the country estate of his friend Verecundus at Cassiciacum, a few miles from Milan. There he spent his time not only in private study and prayer [3] but also in conducting a series of three philosophical discussions in which his brother, Navigius, his fellow-citizens and pupils, Trygetius and Licentius, his cousins, Lastidianus and Rusticus, his Mother, Monnica, his son, Adeodatus, and his friend Alypius, participated.[4] These discussions were recorded word for word by servants. After careful revision by Augustine they were published under the titles, *Contra Academicos, De beata vita,* and *De Ordine.* In addition to these works Augustine began at Cassiciacum the two books, *Soliloquiorum,* completing them before his baptism at Easter, 387 A.D. After his return to Milan from Cassiciacum but prior to his baptism he also wrote the unfinished treatise, *De immortalitate animae.* Since it belongs to the same period it is often treated as if written at Cassiciacum.[1]

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[1] De ordine I, II, 5.

[2] Conf. IX, II, 2-4.

[3] De ordine I, III, 6; I, VIII, 22 and 25; and I, X, 29.

[4] Not all were present at each of the discussions, Alypius, for example, being absent from the discussion, De beata vita and the first part of De ordine. See De beata vita I, 6; Contra Acad. I, I, 4; De ordine I, II, 5; I, III, 7; and II, I, 1.

The first discussion at Cassiciacum concerns the nature of the happy life. It takes the form of a debate between Licentius and Trygetius in which Licentius defends the Academic position that happiness is found in the search for truth, although truth itself is never discovered, while Trygetius defends the view that to be truly happy one must discover and embrace the truth. Out of this first debate, which constitutes almost the whole of the first book against the Academics, there grow two discussions, one on the nature of happiness, which forms the dialogue *De beata vita,* and the other a refutation of the arguments of Academic Skepticism and a demonstration of the objective character of truth, which comprises the last two books of the *Contra Academicos.*

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[1] Four letters written at Cassiciacum ought also to be included, one to Hermogenianus, one to Zenobius and two to Nebridius. (Epist. I-IV. Migne P. L., vol. XXXIII, col. 61-67.)

The occasion of the next discussion is the sound of running water behind the baths, which attracts Augustine's attention one night as he is observing his custom of serious reflection before falling asleep. The noise, now clearer, now more measured, now a sudden swirling, prompts him to ponder the cause of the varying sounds. In this investigation, first Licentius and then the others join Augustine, and together they proceed to study the whole problem of causation and divine providence, finally concluding that nothing happens without a cause and that all order and causation lead back to God. This study forms the two books of the *De ordine* and is the last of the general discussions at Cassiciacum. The two books, *Soliloquiorum*, are in the form of a running dialogue between Reason (*Ratio*) and Augustine, in which the subjects discussed are God and the human soul. The *De immortalitate animae,* written at Milan, outlines without the use of dialogue various arguments proving the immortality of the soul.

An analysis of these earliest works of Augustine reveals the complete framework, if not the rounded form of the Augustinian system. There are references to the several stages of his spiritual development,[1] the identification of Wisdom and Truth with

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[1] Contra Acad. I, I, 3; II, II, 3-5; De beata vita I, 4-5; De ordine I, II, 4-5, I, X, 30; Solil. I, X, 17.

Christ,[1] the acknowledgment that Christ as the Son of God is himself God and not a being of a lower order or nature,[2] the recognition of the authority of Christ and the Christian Scriptures,[3] and references to the incarnation of God in human form,[4] the doctrine of the trinity,[5] and Augustine's practice of prayer and devotion.[6] On the other hand, there is no reference to the fall of Adam or the loss of man's freedom through that fall, and the doctrine of the grace of God is not fully developed although implicit in each of the Dialogues. The question of certitude, the nature of truth, the highest good of man, the explanation of order in the universe, the nature and attributes of God, his relation to the world and man, and the nature and immortality of the soul, are the chief questions discussed. The references to the incarnation and the trinity occur frequently enough to convince us that Augustine's point of view is now thoroughly Christian. They are, however, passing references only, since they are not the subjects under consideration.

The philosophical point of view of the Cassiciacum Dialogues is, of course, Platonic and Augustine's debt to both Plato and Plotinus is difficult to exaggerate. At the same time there is no borrowing without comprehension, for Augustine has already made the Neoplatonic philosophy his own. He is still, perhaps, somewhat intoxicated with the new wine, especially with dialectic, but the intoxication is harmless and the changes to be made in his philosophical outlook are in minor details only. Augustine himself, writing his severely critical and definitive books of *Retractationum* near the close of his life, can find surprisingly little in these first works to criticize or amend save matters of terminology and emphasis.

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[1] Contra Acad. II, I, 1; De beata vita IV, 34.

[2] De ordine I, X, 29; II, V, 16; and De beata vita IV, 34.

[3] De beata vita I, 4; Contra Acad. III, XX, 43.

[4] Contra Acad. III, XIX, 42; De ordine II, V, 16.

[5] De ordine II, V, 16; De beata vita IV, 35.

[6] Ibid I, III, 6; I, VIII, 22 and 25; I, X, 29. Cf. Epist. III, 4.

## *The Relation of Authority and Reason*

While not the first subject discussed in the Dialogues it might be well to indicate at the outset the relation of faith and reason expressed in these earliest works. This relation was determined largely by his experience, first with Manichaean rationalism and later with Catholic authoritarianism. The Manichaeans had greatly attracted him as a young man by their promise of certain truth without appeal to authority. He soon found, however, that many of their doctrines were not susceptible of rational proof and that the whole method of the Manichees resembled that of crafty fowlers "who set branches smeared with bird lime beside water to deceive thirsty birds." [1] Turning later to his mother's faith he was impressed by both the moderation and the honesty of the Catholic position as compared with that of the Manichaeans. He found, moreover, that once he had accepted the dogmas of the Church on faith they appeared entirely reasonable although they had previously seemed either difficult or impossible to believe.

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[1] De util. cred. I, 2. Cf. Ibid IX, 21.

In the Dialogues, therefore, he insists on the priority of faith. One is cleansed and made ready for illumination, he declares, "by the authority of the Christian mysteries, not by the circumlocutions of disputations." [1] He recognizes, however, that reason has its place and that there are two roads which may be pursued when we are perplexed by some obscurity.[2] Both roads lead to the same goal, since there can be no conflict between true philosophy and the Christian religion. On the other hand, if there should appear to be a conflict, the authority of Christ takes precedence over philosophy.[3]

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[1] "Non disputationum ambagibus, sed mysteriorum auctoritate purgatur." De ordine II, IX, 27.

[2] "Duplex enim est via quam sequimur, cum rerum nos obscuritas movet, aut rationem, aut certe auctoritatem." Ibid II, V, 16.

[3] "Nulli autem dubium est gemino pondere nos impelli ad discendum, auctoritatis atque rationis. Mihi autem certum est nusquam prorsus a Christi auctoritate discedere: non enim reperio valentiorem. Quod autem subtilissima ratione persequendum est; ita enim jam sum affectus, ut quid sit verum, non credendi solum, sed etiam intelligendo apprehendere impatienter desiderem; apud Platonicos me interim quod sacris nostris non repugnet reperturum esse confido." Contra Acad. II, XX, 43. Cf. Ibid II, XIX, 42 and De ordine I, XI, 32.

"In the order of time," says Augustine, "authority precedes reason but in the order of reality reason is prior. For it is one which is placed first in the actual doing, the other which is judged by the many in the seeking. And so, although the authority of good men seems to be more salubrious for the multitude of the ignorant, reason is truly more appropriate for the erudite. Nevertheless, since no one is made experienced except from inexperience . . . it happens that to all those who desire to learn great and hidden goods nothing is disclosed unless authority opens the door."[1]

It is evident, then, that while Augustine recognizes that reason may be a more suitable guide for the learned, the recognition of authority is required of all, the learned as well as the ignorant. On the other hand, neither the ignorant nor the learned need be limited to dependence on authority only, for once having been placed on the road to truth by authority they are now ready to comprehend by reason what they have accepted in faith.[2]

Reason should also be used in the appraisal of one's authority. It is not enough to trust any and every authority. Before the act of faith we must judge what is worthy to be believed and distinguish the good authority from the bad, the divine from the human. Only divine authority is a true and safe guide.[1] Human authority, always subject to error, ought to carry only as much weight as the learning which supports it. One who has great wisdom and who practices what he teaches should be listened to with respect but should not be regarded as a divine or infallible authority. God alone is free from error, Christ is the supreme authority.[2]

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[1] De ordine II, IX, 26.

[2] "ratio quam post auctoritatis cunabula firmus et idoneus jam sequitur atque comprehendit." Ibid.

In summary, then, there are two roads to truth: philosophy which promises knowledge and scarcely succeeds in delivering even a very few, and divine authority which makes the truth freely and surely available even to the ignorant. Both lead to the same destination but the way of authority is the surer of the two and is the path that all must traverse at the beginning of their journey.

While philosophy has not the certainty of authority it does not condemn the Christian mysteries but rather devotes its entire time to understanding them as they ought to be understood. All true philosophy is, in fact, Christian, for it "has no other business than to teach what is the uncaused cause of all things, and how great an intelligence abides in it, and what for our salvation comes forth from it without any degeneration: whom the sacred mysteries, which by sincere and unshakeable faith deliver the masses, declare to be one omnipotent God who at the same time is tripotent Father, Son and Holy Spirit." [1]

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[1] "Auctoritas autem partim divina est, partim humana: sed vera, firma, summa ea est quae divina nominatur." De ordine II, IX, 27.

[2] Contra Acad. III, XX, 43. Cf. Retract. I, XII and De magistro XIV, 46.

## *Truth and Certitude*

In the Soliloquies Augustine tells us that he is dominated by two overpowering desires, to know God and the soul.[2] His desire to know the soul is, however, not an end in itself. It is that he may live in accord with his true nature, that he may know how to control the desires of his body and devote himself completely to the service and enjoyment of God.[3] In a real sense, then, God is the one object of his desire. All else, such as life, ease and friends are desired not for their own sake but for the sake of wisdom or God. God alone is desired for his own sake.[4]

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[1] "Philosophia rationem promittit, et vix paucissimos liberat: quos tamen non modo non contemnere illa mysteria, sed sola intelligere, ut intelligenda sunt, cogit. Nullumque aliud habet negotium, quae vera, et, ut ita dicam, germana philosophia est, quam ut doceat quod sit omnium rerum principium sine principio, quantusque in eo maneat intellectus, quidve inde in nostram salutem sine ulla degeneratione manaverit: quem unum Deum omnipotentem eumque tripotentem, Patrem, et Filium, et Spiritum sanctum, docent veneranda mysteria, quae fide sincera et inconcussa populos liberant." De ordine II, V, 16. Cf. De quant. animae VII, 12.

[2] "A. Ecce oravi Deum. R. Quid ergo scire vis?
A. Haec ipsa omnia quae oravi. R. Breviter ea collige.
A. Deum et animam scire cupio. R. Nihilne plus?
A. Nihil omnino." Solil. I, II, 7. Cf. Ibid I, XV, 27.

[3] Cf. Étienne Gilson, Introduction à l'Étude de Saint Augustin. Paris, 1929. p. 2.

[4] Solil. I, XIII, 22.

It is natural then that the chief theme of these first works should be Truth or God. That we know truth is the fundamental postulate of Augustine's thinking. It is the foundation on which he builds his philosophy.[1]

The refutation of skepticism is, therefore, his first task.[2] This does not demand the examination of his own postulate. It is enough if he can show that even the so-called skeptic possesses knowledge of the truth. To do this Augustine points out the inconsistencies and self-contradictions of Carneades, Cicero and the other skeptics. For example, he reminds the Academics that while they believe they are wise they admit they are ignorant of Wisdom. That, is, they confess that they cannot find Truth; and Wisdom is knowledge of Truth. They cannot, then, properly call themselves wise, for it is obvious that no one can be wise in any respect without knowing Wisdom or Truth.[3] Again, they cannot claim to be happy, for no one is happy who does not have what he desires. They seek and therefore desire the discovery of truth. Since they do not discover it, it follows that they do not have what they desire, from which it also follows that they are not happy. Still again, they cannot be wise, for no one is wise unless he is happy.[1]

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[1] Cf. Charles Boyer, L'Idée de Vérité dans la philosophie de saint Augustin. Paris, 1921. p. 12.

[2] His purpose in writing the *Contra Academicos,* according to his letter to Hermogenianus, is not to attack the New Academy but to make known what he claims is its true teaching, which is concealed from the masses. He wishes not only to purge himself of skepticism and all "vain and pernicious opinions" but also to persuade others (whose minds skepticism lulls to slumber) that Truth can be found. Cf. Epist. I; Contra Acad. II, III, 9; II, IX, 23.

[3] Contra Acad. III, IX, 19; III, XIV, 31.

Certitude for Augustine has no meaning apart from the universal certitude or truth which is its ground. Truth is called Truth for no other reason "than as being that by which everything is true which is true." [2] Nothing can be true without also being Truth.[3]

In the ordinary logical sense the true is "that which is" [4] and the truth is that by which that which is is shown.[5] On the other hand, considered metaphysically the true is "that which is" eternally and unchangeably. In this sense truth becomes synonymous with pure being or God. Since God alone truly is, he is the ground of all reality and truth. All human knowledge involves the presence of God, all attainment of truth is the knowledge of God, all things are real in so far as they are like God.

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[1] De beata vita I, 14. Cf. Contra Acad. I, VIII, 23.

[2] Solil. II, XV, 29; II, X, 18; I, I, 3; De immort. animae XII, 19.

[3] Solil. II, II, 2.

[4] Ibid. II, V, 8.

Professor McKeon points out that this definition was used in a similar sense by Aristotle (Metaphysica, $\gamma$, 7, 1011b). Cf. Thomas Aquinas' Doctrine of Knowledge and Its Historical Setting by Richard McKeon. Speculum Vol. III, No. 4, October, 1928. Cf. also C. Boyer, L'Idée de Vérité dans la philosophie de saint Augustin, p. 2.

[5] Ibid II, XV, 29; II, X, 18. Cf. De vera relig. XXXVI, 66.

Assuming the correctness of Augustine's definition of truth, it is obvious that if he can adduce convincing evidence of certitude he has proved the existence and intelligibility of Truth and God. This he does very easily by the use of dialectic, for the very process of dialectic guarantees some certitude. For example, we may be sure that if there are four elements in the world there are not five; if there is one sun there are not two, if a soul is immortal it cannot die, if a man is happy he is not miserable, if the sun shines it is not night, if we are awake we are not asleep,—and so on *ad infinitum.*[1] Even this much certitude is enough to refute the skeptics and demonstrate the existence of truth.[2] In addition, however, to this certitude of logical and mathematical relationships, we have another certitude, namely, that of consciousness of our own existence. This argument, anticipating Descartes' *cogito ergo sum,* expresses the inescapable conviction that even if I am mistaken, still I am, for existence is necessary even to err. The first suggestion of this argument is found in the third book of the *Contra Academicos,* where, after Augustine has declared that no argument can refute the force of the senses, he observed that even if we do not see things as they are, nevertheless we do see something.[3]

In the same dialogue there is another suggestion of the argument in the remark of Augustine that it is better to say that there is no wisdom than to intimate that a wise man does not know why he lives or how he lives or whether he lives at all.[1] In the *De beata vita* Augustine makes his thought more explicit. In questioning the doubting Navigius concerning what he knows, he asks, "Do you at least know that you live?" Navigius declares that he does. "You know, therefore, that you live," Augustine continues, "For indeed no one can live without life." Navigius answers again, "This I know." [2]

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[1] Contra Acad. III, XIII, 29. Cf. Ibid III, X, 23; III, XI, 25.

[2] Ibid. Cf. III, IX, 21.

[3] Ibid III, XI, 24.

A similar dialogue is found in the Soliloquies where Reason (Ratio) and Augustine discuss the question. "Thou who wilt know thyself," asks Reason, "knowest thou that thou art?" "I know." "Whence knowest thou?" "I know not." "Feelest thou thyself to be simple or manifold?" "I know not." "Knowest thou thyself to be moved?" "I know not." "Knowest thou thyself to think?" "I know." "Therefore it is true that thou thinkest." "True." [3] The final and most convincing form of the argument, at least in these early works is found in the *De immortalitate animae,* where Augustine points out that the very fact of error is a proof of one's existence, since one cannot even be mistaken unless one lives.[4]

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[1] Contra Acad. III, IX, 19.

[2] De beata vita II, 7.

[3] Solil. II, I, 1.

[4] "At nisi qui vivit, fallitur nemo." De immort. animae XI, 18. This is repeated in various forms in De lib. arb. II, III, 7; De vera relig. XXXIX, 73; De duabus animabus contra Man. X,

Because of its historical interest the importance of the argument is likely to be exaggerated. That Augustine appreciated its value is evident from his frequent use of it in the later as well as in the earlier works. On the other hand, the arsenal of arguments in the *Contra Academicos* and his appraisal of their value in the *Retractationum* [1] witness to the fact that he does not believe the argument is by any means the only refutation of skepticism or the only example of certitude.

It is, however, irrefutable evidence that Truth and, therefore, God may be known. To be sure, only the pure shall fully know the Truth [2] and only in the life to come shall there be "an utter plenitude of Truth without any falsehood." [3] On the other hand, to know anything to be true is to that extent to know the divine and absolute Truth.

## *Proofs of the Existence of God*

The demonstration of certitude and truth is also a demonstration of God's existence, since God is Truth. This is not, however, the only evidence that God exists. The order in the universe, the presence of beauty and the reign of universal law all imply the existence of a first cause, a supreme and original

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13; Enchiridion XX, 7; De trin. XV, XII, 21; X, X, 14; and De civ. dei XI, 26.

[1] Retract. I, I, 1-4.

[2] Solil. I, I, 2.

[3] Ibid II, XX, 36.

beauty, and a being responsible for the continuance of order. Nothing happens without a cause.[1] Every cause is one of an endless chain of causes, else there would be no order. Since, however, order is everywhere and disorder is only apparent, never real (even evil contributing to the perfection of order), the universal order is a guarantee of God's existence, all order leading back to God.[2]

Unity also leads to God. Everything in so far as it is is one. A stone in order to be a stone must have its parts made solid in unity. A tree cannot be a tree without being one. Any living being to be alive must be one, since if it is divided it will cease to live. What do friends strive to be if not one? Certainly the more they are one the better friends they are. Again, a state is a unity of people, and an army a unity of soldiers.[3] In short, the whole world, both in its parts and in its totality, is a living unity, and the unity of the parts must have been derived from the unity of the whole.[4]

Beauty is still another pathway to God. Beauty might be said to have been born from unity, and it is found everywhere that being is. As order in the universe is evidence of the father of order and unity, of the supreme and eternal unity, so beauty in the world is a sign or imitation of the perfect beauty that is God, in comparison with which all earthly beauty is ugly and foul.[1]

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[1] De ordine I, IV, 11.

[2] Ibid I, IX, 27.

[3] Ibid II, XVIII, 48.

[4] Ibid II, XVIII-XIX, 48-51.

A different argument is found in the *De immortalitate animae.* Here Augustine observes that nothing makes or begets itself, else we could say of it that it was before it was. On the other hand, if there is anything that has not been made or born and yet exists it must exist eternally. It is obvious that no one can ascribe such a nature or excellence to any corporeal thing. We are, however, forced to ascribe it to the soul.

We can agree, for example, that if any body is eternal, every soul is eternal. We can also agree that any soul must be preferred to any body and all eternal things to those not eternal. If, moreover, it is true that body was created, it must have been made by some one or something not inferior to itself. The power of conferring being can, however, only belong to a superior being, for that which creates must be of a higher order of existence than that which it makes. All body has, therefore, been made by some force and nature superior to and more powerful than itself. This superior nature cannot, moreover, be corporeal, since if body was made by body, the universe could not have been made. We may conclude, then, that something higher than body, a divine force or nature, the incorporeal cause of all body, has created and now sustains the universe with mighty power.[1]

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[1] De ordine II, XIX, 51.

As a last example of proofs of God's existence found in the Dialogues we might cite his argument from the immutable character of numbers and mathematical relations. This proof, which also includes the arguments from unity and beauty, begins with an analysis of the degrees of being. Of all the different orders of existence, man, says Augustine, stands first and highest. He can easily demonstrate his superiority over other living things because he alone is a rational animal.[2] He alone has the power to distinguish and connect things and to use both dialectic and mathematics.[3]

Of all the work of reason the most wonderful is that dealing with numbers, for here one discovers an immutable element in reality. One and one are always two, two and two are always four. These answers were not truer yesterday than today, they will not be truer tomorrow or a year from now than they are today. Even if the world should perish the sums given above would still be true. The world of created things is subject to change, with nothing remaining the same from hour to hour, but the world of numbers is unchangeable and eternal.[1]

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[1] De immort. animae VIII, 14. In a strict sense this is not so much a proof of God's existence as of a world soul. This doctrine was held at this time by Augustine and was suggested again in chapter XV, section 24 of the same work, "Per animam ergo corpus subsistit, et eo ipso est quo animatur, sive universaliter, ut mundus, sive particulariter, ut unum quodque animal intra mundum." The doctrine of a world soul is repudiated in the Retract. I, V, 3.

[2] De ordine II, XIX, 49.

[3] Ibid II, XVIII, 47-48.

Since, however, God is understood by Augustine to be the one unchangeable and eternal being, the knowledge of numbers is also a knowledge of God. By distinguishing and connecting these eternal numbers man enters the presence of the immutable and divine. Through them he knows how to attain the happy life and enjoy "the highest measure who is the father of order," guided no longer by faith alone but now also by certain reasons.[2]

## *The Idea of God*

The idea of God in the Cassiciacum Dialogues is virtually that of the later works. God is an ineffable, immutable, spiritual substance, whose existence is most evident but whose nature is known fully by no man. So little do we really know of God that Augustine suggests that one knows him better in not knowing him, and that all our exact knowledge of God consists in knowing how ignorant we are of what he is.[3] On the other hand, no one can ignore the fact *that* he is, for the certainty of his existence is forced upon us at every turn. We know, moreover, that he manifests himself in three persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit who, being of the same substance, are co-equal and co-eternal. In these earliest works it is the second person of the trinity, Wisdom or Truth, to whom Augustine's attention is chiefly directed. At the same time, distinctions between Truth and the other members of the trinity are carefully observed, the Holy Spirit being recognized as that by which one is led to the Truth, the Son as the Truth one should and may enjoy to the full and through which one is united with the highest measure, who is the Father of Truth and Order.[1] Already, moreover, God the Father can be distinguished as the source of being, God the Son as the source of knowledge and God the Spirit as the source of goodness and grace.

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[1] De ordine II, IX, 50. Cf. De immort. animae II, 2.

[2] Ibid II, XIX, 50.

[3] "Qui scitur melius nesciendo." Ibid II, XVI, 44; "cuius nulla scientia est in anima, nisi scire quomodo eum nesciat." Ibid II, XVIII, 47. Cf. Ibid II, XIX, 51.

### (a) *God: the Source of Being*

God, says Augustine, is pure being, for since he alone is not subject to change he alone exists in the fullest sense. He is the only uncreated being, everything else having been created by him from nothing after the model of Truth or the intelligible world. The created world, while good, is of a lower order of reality and is therefore to be clearly distinguished from the one true and eternal substance of which it is a copy. The created substance is perishable and changeable, whereas God is a substance "where is no discord, no confusion, no shifting, no indigence, no death; where is supreme concord, supreme evidence, supreme steadfastness, supreme fullness and life supreme." [1] The created substance is visible, the uncreated cannot be seen by mortal eyes or any human sense.[2] The created is sensible, the uncreated intelligible.[3]

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[1] De beata vita IV, 35; De ordine II, XIX, 50-51.

The created universe is a hierarchy of being or reality ranging from Nihil or the absence of all being to man and the angels. God, who preserves and sustains this creation, also rules it by his providence [4] moving all while remaining himself unmoved.[5] The whole universe is subject to law, nothing happening without a cause and the unbroken chain of causes leading back to God. What one calls chance or fortune is really the working of a secret order, shaped and controlled by God.[6]

While God is not to be confused with his creation he is in everything that exists as the first and efficient cause. He is the source of all being, all goodness, all truth. In so far, then, as anything is or is good or is true, God is present in it. Nothing exists except in and through him, since without his support the world would instantly vanish.

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[1] Solil. I, I, 4. [2] Contra Acad. I, I, 1. Cf. Epist. II, III, 4.

[3] Ibid III, XIX, 42; De ordine I, XI, 32; Solil. I, XV, 29.

[4] De ordine I, I, 1.

[5] Ibid I, II, 4. The influence of Aristotle is clearly evident here.

[6] Contra Acad. I, I, 1.

In addition to the important distinction between the created and the uncreated, there may be distinguished many different levels of reality in created being. Body, for example, is of a lower order of reality than mind.[1] Speaking more generally we may say that the degree of reality of anything may be measured by one's nearness, participation in or resemblance to God. God is the Truth, the Wisdom, the true and crowning Life, the Blessedness, the Good and Fair, the intelligible Light.[2] The place of anything in the order of reality is determined by the extent to which Truth, Goodness, and Light are in it. One truly lives only in so far as one turns to God.[3]

Man has been created after the image and likeness of God,[4] but it is only his soul that knows God. Body is a cage, a prison house of the soul.[5] It is, however, not an evil, for all things were created good, although, of course, with degrees of goodness.[6] Evil is but the absence of good, a shadow throwing goodness in clearer relief. Since it is not a substance it has no positive reality, no being in itself. Many things, moreover, that appear to be evil are really good. In fact, the apparent disorders of the world help to make the world more orderly, for everything in the universe has its place and purpose. For example, the executioner, the prostitute, and man's sexual organs, considered in themselves are thoroughly detestable, but each is necessary to society. While, therefore, the individual parts of the world may appear evil and disordered, the harmony and goodness of the whole is perfect.[1]

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[1] Solil. I, XII, 21; De immort. animae II, 2.

[2] Ibid I, I, 3.

[3] "Deus a quo averti, cadere; in quem converti, resurgere; in quo manere, consistere est. Deus a quo exire, emori; in quem redire, reviviscere; in quo habitare, vivere est. . . . Deus quem relinquere, hoc est quod perire; quem attendere, hoc est quod amare, quem videre, hoc est quod habere." Ibid.

[4] Ibid I, I, 4.

[5] Ibid I, XIV, 24. Cf. Contra Acad. I, III, 9. (This is repudiated in De civ. dei XI, 23.)

[6] Ibid I, I, 2.

### (b) *God: the Source of Knowledge*

Wisdom or Truth, the second member of the divine trinity, means for Augustine the intelligible world as distinguished from the visible world of the senses.[2] The intelligible world is where Truth abides.[3] It is the real world, the world of dialectic and of numbers, the world of divine and eternal ideas by comparison with which sensible realities pale into insignificance.[4] If, then, one asks in what does wisdom consist, Augustine answers, "to know the order of things, that is, to distinguish the two worlds and the author of the universe himself." [5]

[1] De ordine I, III-V, 6-14; I, VII, 18; I, VIII, 25; II, IV, 12-13; I, I, 2; II, IV, 11; II, VII, 23; II, XIX, 51; Contra Acad. I, I, 1.

[2] Contra Acad. III, XIX, 42; De ordine I, XI, 32.

[3] Solil. I, XV, 29; De beata vita IV, 34; Contra Acad. II, I, 1.

[4] De ordine II, XIV, 41; II, XIX, 51.

[5] Ibid II, XVIII, 47.

Such knowledge is, however, the gift of God. Those who come to wisdom are inspired.[1] Things can be seen by the eyes or heard by the ears or experienced by the other senses, but it is only by the illumination of God that they are understood. Augustine likens the process of divine illumination to that of the sun, remarking that "As the earth is visible, so is light; but the earth, unless illumined by light, cannot be seen. Therefore these things also which are taught in the schools, which no one who understands them doubts in the least to be absolutely true, we must believe to be incapable of being understood, unless they are illumined by something else, as it were, a sun of their own." [2]

From God, then, is all the truth that we speak.[3] If we say anything wise, it is from the divine spring that it flows; [4] if thoughts ravish us they are from God; [5] it is God and not man who serves without ceasing the food of reason,[6] operating always according to his hidden providence.[7]

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[1] De ordine I, IV, 10.

[2] Solil. I, VIII, 15. Cf. Contra Acad. III, VI, 13.

[3] "Huius est verum omne quod loquimur." De beata vita IV, 35.

[4] "ex quo illa, et quam divino forte manarent." Ibid II, 10.

[5] "Nam unde ista quae miramur, nisi inde (from God) procedunt?" Ibid IV, 27.

[6] "Alius (God) est enim qui omnibus cum omnes, tum maxime tales epulas praebere non cessat: sed nos ab edendo, vel imbecillitate, or saturitate, vel negotio plerumque cessamus." Ibid III, 17.

[7] De ordine II, IV, 12; De beata vita IV, 31.

### (c) *God: the Source of Goodness and Happiness*

The third person of the trinity, the Holy Spirit, is defined as that "by which one is led to truth." [1] It is the Spirit who is present and who assists us in our search for truth.[2] It is the Spirit through whom all are happy that are happy.[3] On the other hand, there is almost no word concerning the Spirit as such. The references to the work of the Spirit are all general references to God and not to an individual member of the trinity.

Augustine's doctrine of grace is implicit in these first works but it is not as yet fully developed. While God is recognized as man's strength and power [4] Augustine believes at this time that every man's will is free to turn to or from God. He also believes that grace is available to all. "Never can I be persuaded," he says, "that we have implored the Divine aid in vain." [5] God would never refuse to illumine a soul which seeks him. It is at this point that one discerns the greatest difference between the early and the later Augustine. The Augustine at Cassiciacum ignores the fall of Adam and treats man as if his will were unimpaired. There is, moreover, no reference to predestination or the limitation of God's grace.

[1] De beata vita IV, 35.
[2] Solil. II, XX, 36.
[3] Ibid I, I, 3.
[4] Ibid II, I, 1.
[5] Ibid II, IX, 16.

The chief concern of Augustine in the Cassiciacum works is to know and possess God. His refutation of the Academics is not simply to demonstrate God's existence but to show them that in the knowledge of Truth or God the happiness that all men seek can be found. His dialogue, *De beata vita,* has a similar aim. It is a new *Hortensius,* which, like the old, seeks to win young men to a love of wisdom, but unlike the original proposes to reveal the place where truth can be beheld.[1] It is not enough, as Cicero thought, to search for truth. Augustine had learned from his own experience that it is not in the quest for truth but in its possession that one finds contentment and wisdom.

Everyone desires happiness, he says,[2] but not everyone agrees as to the things that bring it. Some, for example, think that happiness is found in the possession of perishable and transitory goods. On the other hand, happiness to be enduring must have a more stable foundation than these things can give. It ought to be obvious that to be truly happy one must provide for oneself that which abides unchanged by time or circumstance. Since, however, only God is eternal and unchanging, it is evident that happiness involves the possession of God. Only he who possesses God is genuinely and completely happy.[1]

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[1] There is little doubt that the *Hortensius* provides the model for the *De beata vita,* but there is also evidence of the influence of at least two other works of Cicero, *De finibus bonorum et malorum libri quinque* (Cf. Book V, XXVI, 77; XXVIII, 84; XXIX, 86-89; XXXII, 95) and *Tusculanarum disputationum libri quinque ad Brutum* (Cf. Book V). Cf. also Prosper Alfaric, L'Evolution Intellectuelle de Saint Augustin. Paris, 1918. pp. 65-67; 429-431. For a discussion of the contents of the *Hortensius* see O. Plasberg, *De M. Tullii Ciceronis Hortensio dialogo.* Berlin, 1892.

[2] De beata vita II, 10.

While this conclusion is immediately approved by Augustine's Cassiciacum friends there is still a question as to the sort of person who possesses God. Licentius suggests that it is one who lives well, Trygetius that it is one who does what God wishes to be done, and Adeodatus, Augustine's talented son, that it is one who does not have an impure spirit.[2] Augustine suggests, however, that all these answers have the same meaning. Certainly one who lives well does what God wishes and he who does what God wishes, lives well, nor is there any way to live well except to do what God desires. Again, to live purely means not only to abstain from sexual intercourse but to avoid all sins, for a truly pure man is one who directs his attention towards God and cleaves to him only. This, however, is but to live well and to do what God wishes.[3] The three answers are, then, in essential agreement.

Since God wishes man to seek him, he who seeks God does what God wishes, lives well and does not have an impure spirit. On the other hand, he who seeks God does not yet possess him. This raises a real difficulty, for it now appears that the possession of God is not quite the same as living well or doing what God desires, even though it is true that anyone who possesses God must live well and do what God wishes.[1] To say that he who seeks God has the favor of God, while he who possesses God has happiness, does not make an end of the difficulty, for it still remains that he does not possess God and that he is not yet happy.[2] The problem is made more embarrassing by the fact that all have agreed that he who is not happy is miserable.[3] Is, therefore, he who is seeking God and who has the favor of God miserable? Finding it impossible to soften this hard saying Augustine and his friends agree that he who is in need is miserable, and that the very meaning of unhappiness is neediness or want (*egestas*).[4]

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[1] De beata vita II, 11.

[2] Ibid II, 12.

[3] Ibid III, 18.

Want, moreover, is nothing but folly (*stultitia*) and this again is but the opposite of wisdom.[5] Since wisdom is therefore the opposite of want as well as of folly it must be defined as fullness (*plenitudo*).[6] Furthermore, since in plenitude there is measure, wisdom must be a measure of the soul.[7] It had, however, already been agreed by the friends discussing the question that if they should discover that misery is nothing but neediness they would admit that anyone is happy who is not in need. This being so all now concede that to be happy is nothing but not to be in need, that is, to be wise. If, moreover, one should ask what wisdom is, Augustine answers, "It is nothing but a mode or measure of the soul, that is, the measure by which the soul keeps itself in equilibrium, so that it neither runs out into excess nor is held down to less than the full. . . . Whoever is happy has, therefore, his own measure, namely, wisdom.[1] What, however, is to be called wisdom if not that which is the wisdom of God? We have, moreover, also accepted by divine authority that the Son of God is nothing but the Wisdom of God,[2] and the Son of God is certainly God. Whoever is happy, therefore, possesses God." [3]

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[1] De beata vita III, 19.
[2] Ibid III, 21.
[3] Ibid II, 11.
[4] Ibid III, 22.
[5] Ibid IV, 27-28.
[6] Ibid IV, 31.
[7] Ibid IV, 32.

In the possession of God one also possesses Truth, for Wisdom and Truth are the same. After quoting the words of Christ, "I am the Truth," [4] to confirm this, Augustine continues, "The Truth, however, in order to be, is made through a certain highest measure, from which it proceeds and into which it returns perfect. No other measure is imposed on the highest measure itself, for if the highest measure is a measure through the highest measure it is a measure through itself. It is also necessary, moreover, that the highest measure be a true measure. As, therefore, truth is begotten by measure, so measure is known by truth. Truth, then, has never been without measure or measure without truth. Who is the Son of God? It has been written, Truth. Who is it who has no Father, who else but the highest measure? Whoever, then, comes to the highest measure through Truth, is happy. This is to possess God with the soul, that is, to enjoy God. Others, although indeed possessed by God, do not possess him." [1]

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[1] De beata vita IV, 33.

[2] I Corinthians I, 24.

[3] De beata vita IV, 34.

[4] St. John XIV, 6.

Since there is no happiness save in the possession of God, it is clear that to live well and to do what God desires must mean the possession as well as the search for God. As, moreover, we seek God, a certain inner admonition "flows forth to us from the very spring of truth, that we may remember God, that we may seek him, that we may thirst for him, having overcome all aversion. This radiance (of truth) that hidden sun sheds upon our inner eyes. From it is all the truth that we speak, even though up to the present, either because of unsound or suddenly opened eyes, we fear to turn to it boldly and behold it fully. This also appears to be nothing other than God, perfect, and without any degeneration, for there is the whole and the all perfect, and at the same time omnipotent God. Nevertheless, so long as we seek him, not yet satisfied by that spring and not yet, to use the expression, satisfied by plenitude, we confess that we have not yet arrived at our measure, and on this account, although now favored by God, we are not yet wise and happy. This is, therefore, the full sufficiency of souls, this is the happy life, to know piously and perfectly by what you are led to the Truth, which Truth you enjoy to the full, and through which you are united with the highest measure. The vanities of the various superstitions having been excluded, these three things declare to understanding persons one God and one substance." [1]

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[1] De beata vita IV, 34.

Thus happiness is defined as the perfect knowledge of the Holy Spirit, which leads to Truth, the enjoyment of that same Truth, and the union, through Truth, with the highest measure from which it proceeds, or in other words, the knowledge and possession of Spirit (God the Holy Spirit), Truth (God the Son) and Measure (God the Father), which together are one substance and one God. When this conclusion has been reached, Monnica recognizes that Augustine has expressed in his definition of happiness the Christian doctrine of the trinity, and after repeating a line of one of Ambrose's hymns, she adds her approval of the discussion, saying, "This is without doubt the happy life, which is the perfect life, to which it is presumed we can be quickly led through firm faith, cheerful hope and glowing love." [2]

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[1] De beata vita IV, 35.

[2] Ibid. This sentiment is undoubtedly also Augustine's. In RETRACT. I, 2, however, Augustine denies that complete happiness is possible in this life, carefully reserving it for the life to come.

In the other Dialogues the method of attaining the happy life and possessing God is further developed. Two pathways to God are suggested, one of authority and the other of philosophy or reason. The method of authority, in distinction from that of philosophy, emphasizes belief not only in the authority of the Scriptures and the Church but more particularly belief in Christ as the Son of God and the incarnation of Wisdom.[1] Wisdom is now distinguished from Measure as the Son is distinguished from the Father. [2] It is probable, however, that at this early period Augustine felt that men might come to know Wisdom or Truth without knowing it to be Christ, since it makes little difference whether the Son of God is called Wisdom or Christ. The wisdom taught by the schools in the name of reason is the same as that held in faith by Christians.[3]

It should be noted that the search for truth is for Augustine never an exclusively intellectual process. Progress in the knowledge of the truth has as its concomitant progress in morality and faith. Whether one chooses the method of philosophy or the method of authority, increasing goodness (devo-

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With the exception of this modification the position of Augustine in the DE BEATA VITA remains substantially unchanged. Cf. Introduction a l'Étude de Saint Augustin. Étienne Gilson. Paris, 1929. p. 6. footnote 2.

[1] Contra Acad. II, I, 1.

[2] De beata vita IV, 34.

[3] Contra Acad. III, XIX, 42; De ordine I, XI, 32.

tion to God alone) is the prerequisite of increasing knowledge of the divine Truth.

In the recognition of this last fact the two pathways to God converge. Regardless of the path we are taking, it is according to our soundness and strength that each of us comprehends that unique and truest good, that "ineffable and incomprehensible light of minds." A few of us may come to God directly but for the great majority there must be a carefully graduated approach.[1]

In this graduated approach of the soul to God, faith, hope and love are all necessary.[2] Without these no mind is healed so as to permit it to know its God.[3] We must not forget, however, that God, and God alone, is the Illuminator of the Soul.[4] It is he who gives us faith and hope and love.

The chief obstacle to the possession of God is the attraction of the senses. To be sure, the senses have value as the eyes of the mind. They must, however, be made "pure from all stain of the body, that is . . . remote and purged from the lusts of mortal things." [5] Fleshly desires and the things of the senses are darkness from which all must turn away who seek the supernal Light.[6]

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[1] Solil. I, XIII, 23. Cf. De quant. animae XXXIII, 70-76; De doctr. christ. II, VII, 9-11.

[2] Ibid I, I, 2.

[3] Ibid II, XX, 36.

[4] Ibid I, VI, 12. Augustine's doctrine of grace is clearly implicit in his theory of knowledge.

[5] Ibid I, VI, 12.

[6] Ibid I, XIV, 24.

Riches are in no wise to be craved, though if they should come they are to be administered with the greatest wisdom and caution.[1] Honors must no longer be desired. Even "the image of a beautiful, modest, complying maiden (wife) well lettered . . . bringing you too (being a despiser of riches) just so large a dowry as will relieve your leisure of all burden on her account" [2] is not to charm the seeker after truth. Augustine declares, "I perceive that nothing more saps the citadel of manly strength, whether of mind or body, than female blandishments and familiarities. Therefore, if (which I have not yet discovered) it appertains to the office of a wise man to desire offspring, whoever for this reason only comes into this connection, may appear to me worthy of admiration, but in no wise a model for imitation: for there is more peril in the essay than felicity in the accomplishment." [3]

As we have already noted the purity demanded of him who seeks the truth is not alone the abstinence from sexual relations but from all sins. A pure spirit is that of one who strives toward God and cleaves to him only.[4] The attainment of such purity is not easy. Progress toward purity and light is a matter of degrees. Augustine himself prays, "lead me through some shorter ways, so that, at least by some neighbor nearness of that light, such as, if I have made any advance whatever, I shall be able to endure, I may be made ashamed of withdrawing my eyes into that darkness which I have left; if indeed I can be said to have left a darkness which yet dares to dally with my blindness." [1]

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[1] Solil. I, X, 17.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid I, X, 17.

[4] De beata vita III, 18.

In addition to shunning the things of sense it is necessary to distinguish between the demonstrations of science and the demonstrations of God.[2] Plato and Plotinus have both said many true things concerning God, but it may be questioned whether it is enough to know God as they knew him, if indeed they did know him.[3] The demonstrations of the school may point out true things while ignoring the connection of those true things with the whole. True knowledge is always illumination by God, through whom whatever is true is true.

If, then, the mind has been divinely illumined and the eyes healed of fleshly lusts, and if one abides in faith, hope, and charity, one has at last the power to turn one's gaze toward the light.[4] By looking attentively one will now behold "the very vision of God, which is the end of looking; not because the power of beholding ceases, but because it has nothing further to which it can turn itself; and this is the truly perfect virtue, Virtue arriving at its end, which is followed by the life of blessedness." [5] In the vision of God, man finds the *summum bonum,* wisdom, truth, happiness, bliss. His happiness is complete for he delights in God.

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[1] Solil. I, XIV, 26.

[2] Ibid I, V, 11.

[3] Ibid I, IV, 9.

[4] Ibid I, VI, 13.

[5] Ibid.

With the possession of God by man our study of the Cassiciacum Dialogues may be brought to a close. Before turning to a study of the later Augustinian writings and his work as a whole we might point out that while there is much that is new in the works of his more mature years, the leading philosophical ideas are still those of Cassiciacum. With the exception of a growing zeal for the work of the Church, accompanied by the increasing realization that the only profitable use of philosophy is to increase one's knowledge of God, a change of position on the relation of soul and body, a repudiation of the doctrines of reminiscence and the world soul, and a modification of his view of free will with the consequent development of the doctrines of predestination and grace, the early and later works are surprisingly consistent. The presuppositions of his thought do not change and the idea of God, while expanded and more carefully developed, suffers little modification.[1] It remains the central principle of both his philosophy and theology, the eternal and unchangeable God, the principle of all existence, of all knowledge, of all happiness and goodness.

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[1] An interesting footnote by Étienne Gilson confirms this view. He writes, "En rendant compte du livre du P. Ch. Boyer, *L'Idée de vérité dans la philosophie de saint Augustin,* nous lui avions reproché de ne pas avoir étudié la doctrine d'un point du vue évolutif. Ayant fait depuis ce travail, comme le P. Boyer l'avait sans doute fait lui-même, nous tenons à rétracter expressément ce reproche comme mal fondé. Il y a eu une évolution psychologique de saint Augustin; il y a eu bien des variations de détail dont nous avons signalé bon nombre, mais nous n'avons jamais reussi

à déceler la moindre variation proprement philosophique dans aucune de ses thèses essentielles. Saint Augustin a fixé ses idées maîtresses dès sa conversion, même, croyons-nous, en ce qui concerne la grace, et il a toujours vécu sur ce capital une fois constitué." *Introduction a l'étude de Saint Augustin.* p. 293.

# CHAPTER III

## REASON AND AUTHORITY

THE place of authority in Augustine's philosophy was determined in part by his analysis of knowledge and in part by his own experience. One of the reasons why he had been attracted to Manichaeism as a young man was the promise that "apart from all terror of authority, by pure and simple reason they would lead within to God and set free from all error those who were willing to be their hearers." [1] Having once joined the sect, however, he learned that truth was not so easily found as he had been led to expect. He was also surprised to find that instead of the promised method of reason "many fabulous and absurd things were forced on belief because they were not capable of demonstration." [2] His long deferred meeting with Faustus confirmed his suspicions of the falsity of Manichaeism, but in leaving his intellectual problems unresolved it also shook his faith in the power of reason. His was not the temperament, however, that could long rest content with skepticism and it is therefore not to be wondered at that he soon found himself leaning more and more toward the faith he had known as a boy.

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[1] De util. cred. I, 2. Cf. pp. 5 and 30-31.

[2] Conf. VI, V, 7. Cf. Contra Faustum Man. XXXII, XIX; Contra epist. Man. quam voc. fund. XIV, 18.

The more Augustine reflected the less mistrustful he became of Catholic authority. Certainly as compared with the method of Manichaeism that of Catholicism was far more reasonable, since it frankly recognized that its mysteries, while not contrary to reason, could not convince an unbelieving mind.[1] As, moreover, he considered his faith in his friends, his obedience to the authority of his physicians, and the vast number of things he accepted as true without visual proof, such as descriptions of cities he had never visited or events recorded before his birth, he began to realize that "unless we should believe, we should do nothing at all in this life."

He was particularly impressed by the thought of how unquestioning a faith he had in the identity of his parents, despite the fact that his faith rested simply on hearsay evidence.[2] If such things as these are taken on faith, and if one can believe the records of secular history, why should one hesitate to believe the Christian Scriptures? Surely there would follow the utter overthrow of all literature handed down from the past, "if what is supported by such a strong popular belief and established by the uniform testimony of so many men and so many times is brought into such suspicion that it is not to have the credit and authority of common history."[1]

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[1] Conf. VI, V, 7.

[2] Ibid.

Having gone this far, it was but a short step to a recognition of "the distinctive peculiarity of the sacred writings," whereby "we are bound to receive as true whatever the canon shows to have been said by even one prophet or apostle, or evangelist."[2] This step Augustine soon took, believing that the authority of the Christian Scriptures "has come down to us from the apostles through the successions of bishops and the extension of the Church, and, from a position of lofty supremacy, claims the submission of every faithful and pious mind. If we are perplexed by an apparent contradiction in Scripture, it is not allowable to say, The author of this book is mistaken; but either the manuscript is faulty or the translation is wrong, or you have not understood."[3]

In accepting the authority of the Bible Augustine believed that one is bound also to accept the authority of the Catholic Church which selected the canon[4] and the doctrines of which coincide perfectly with those of the Holy Scriptures, the Bible asserting nothing but the Catholic faith, in regard to things past, future and present.[1]

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[1] De moribus eccl. cath. XXIX, 60. Cf. Contra Faustum Man. XXXIII, 6; De fide re. quae non vid. II, 4.

[2] Contra Faustum Man. XI, V. Augustine believes in the harmony of the Old with the New Testament, declaring that the same divine Spirit wrote them both. He does, however, concede that "Inter omnes divinas auctoritates . . . Evangelium merito excellit." De cons. evang. I, I, 1. Cf. De moribus eccl. cath. XVIII, 33-34 and XXIII, 43.

[3] Contra Faustum Man. XI, V. Cf. Epist. LXXXII, I, 3.

[4] De div. quaest. LXXXIII, Qu. LXVIII; De cons. evang. I, I, 2; Commonitorium vulgo VII.

He believed, moreover, that the Church is itself an infallible authority. "It is not without reason," he observed, "that so eminent height of the authority of the Christian faith is diffused throughout the entire world." [2] The universal character of the Church, its unbroken succession of priests "beginning from the very seat of the Apostle Peter," its purity of doctrine and wisdom, its authority "inaugurated by miracles, nourished by hope, enlarged by love and established by age," [3] all contributed to his decision to obey its command to believe. So deeply was he impressed that he declared he would not believe the gospel except as moved by the authority of the Catholic Church.[4]

On the other hand, he insists that "the sure and proper foundation of the Catholic faith is Christ," [5] and that that is rightly held to have been handed down by apostolic authority which "is held by the whole Church and as a matter of invariable custom and not simply something instituted by councils."[1]

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[1] De doctr. christ. III, X, 15.

[2] Conf. VI, XI, 19. Cf. "Nullis me video credidisse, nisi populorum atque gentium confirmatae opinioni ac famae admodum celeberrimae: hoc autem populos Ecclesiae catholicae mysteria usquequaque occupasse." De util. cred. XIV, 31.

[3] Contra epist. Man. quam voc. fund. V, 6.

[4] "Ego vero Evangelio non crederem, nisi me catholicae Ecclesiae commoveret auctoritas." Ibid.

[5] Enchiridion 5.

Augustine recognizes, then, two absolute authorities, the Scriptures[2] and the Church.[3] Believing the Scriptures on the authority of the Church he thinks one finds not only absolute truth but also "a system of teaching most suited to refresh and renew minds, and clearly so ordered in measure, that there is no one but may draw thence, what is enough for himself, if only he approach to draw with devotion and piety, as true religion demands."[4] If one has learned any false and hurtful thing in other books it is condemned in the Scriptures; if one has learned any true and useful thing the Scriptures also contain it. "And while," he says, "every man may find there all useful learning acquired elsewhere, he will find there in much greater abundance things that are to be found nowhere else, but can be learned only in the wonderful sublimity and simplicity of the Scriptures."[5]

When at Cassiciacum Augustine was convinced that one could obtain a completely satisfying knowledge of God simply by a study of philosophy. As, however, he becomes more closely identified with the work of the Church, he feels that the knowledge of God gained through secular philosophy is not enough for man's salvation. He still recognizes the ability of philosophy to prove the existence of God but he declares that this is not sufficient. Belief in Christ must be added if one is to be saved.

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[1] "Et si quisquam in hac re auctoritatem divinam quaerat, quanquam quod universa tenet Ecclesia, nec conciliis institutum sed semper retentum est, nonnisi auctoritate apostolica traditum rectissime creditur." De baptismo contra Don. IV, XXIV, 31.

[2] De civ. dei XI, 3; XIV, 7; De magistro XIII, 46; De doctr. christ. II, 42; III, 28; De util. cred. VI, 13; De gen. ad litt. VII, XXVIII, 42; Enchiridion 4; Contra Faustum Man. XXXII, 19.

[3] De doctr. christ. II, 31; De util. cred. XV, 33 and XVIII, 36; De moribus eccl. cath. XVIII, 33-34.

[4] De util. cred. VI, 13.

[5] De doctr. christ. II, 42.

He concedes that the books of the philosophers contain a great deal of truth, but he points out that after all they are the discoveries of men and not the commandments of God. Some of them, by God's help, have made really great discoveries, but, on the other hand, when left to themselves their human infirmities have betrayed them all into many errors.[1]

Even the Platonists, who are the greatest and best of the philosophers, cannot lead one to salvation. It is true that while the other philosophers spend their time and energy seeking the immediate causes of things and endeavoring to discover the right modes of learning and living, they alone seek God and find "where resides the cause by which the universe has been constituted and the light by which truth is to be discovered and the fountain at which felicity is to be drunk."[2] It is also to their credit that they declare that God is the true and highest good and that the true philosopher is one who loves God.[1]

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[1] De civ. dei II, VII.

[2] Ibid VIII, X. Cf. Ibid VIII, IV.

It is not enough, however, to know God as Plato knows him, for if it were, the sacrifice of Christ would have been made in vain. "Since, however," says Augustine, "Christ did not die in vain, therefore, human nature cannot by any means be justified and redeemed from God's most righteous wrath, in a word, from punishment, except by faith and the mystery of the blood of Christ."[2]

This being so, it is not advisable to spend too much time in the study of secular philosophy or other forms of speculative curiosity. In the brief time we have on earth it is better to select out of the infinite number of possible truths those that will be most useful in leading to our salvation. Secular knowledge is not only irrelevant to salvation but may even lead us astray.

It was the belief of Augustine even before his baptism that "true and genuine philosophy has no other business than to teach us what is the original or uncaused cause of all things, and how great is the intelligence abiding in it and what it is that for our salvation has issued thence without any degeneration."[3]

[1] De civ. dei VIII, I; VIII, VIII.

[2] De nat. et gratia I, 2.

[3] "Nullumque aliud habet negotium, quae vera, et, ut ita dicam, germana philosophia est, quam ut doceat quod sit omnium rerum principium sine principio, quantusque in eo maneat intellectus, quidve inde in nostram salutem sine ulla degeneratione manaverit: quem unum Deum omnipotentem eumque tripotentem, Patrem, et Filium, et Spiritum sanctum." De ordine II, V, 16.

From the very beginning, then, of his long career as a philosopher he insisted that God is not only the center of all philosophy but the end of all philosophizing. Genuine philosophy, therefore, far from despising the Christian dogmas, has as its primary aim a correct and complete understanding of them.[1] Thus all true philosophy is Christian and Christianity is the one true philosophy.[2]

But while there is only one philosophy, we may distinguish two orders of knowledge, one the rational cognizance of temporal things and the other the intellectual cognizance of eternal things.[3] The first, which he calls *scientia,* is the work of the natural reason; the second, which is wisdom or *sapientia,* is the product of faith and the gift of grace.

True things may be known by *scientia,* but truth only by *sapientia.* The distinction practically becomes that between secular and Christian learning, for since "valid conclusions may be drawn not only from true but from false propositions, the laws of valid reasoning may easily be learned in the schools, outside the pale of the Church. The truth of propositions must, however, be inquired into in the sacred books of the Church." [1]

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[1] "Philosophia . . . tamen non modo non contemnere illa mysteria, sed solo intelligere, ut intelligenda sunt, cogit." De ordine II, V, 16.

[2] "Obsecro te, non sit honestior philosophia gentium, quam nostra Christiana, quae una est vera philosophia, quandoquidem studium vel amor sapientiae significatur hoc nomine." Contra Julianum Pelag. IV, XIV, 72.

[3] De trin. XII, XV, 25.

With all *sapientia* the gift of God, God himself becomes our one true teacher and authority.[2] It is he who teaches us by illuminating the inner man; it is he who speaks to us through his two divinely appointed authorities, the Church and the Scriptures. We are absolutely dependent on him for all wisdom, for although the soul can create sense perceptions from itself, through the body, it is powerless to have intellectual perception without the aid of God. To be sure, the light of Truth is never absent from the inner man, but sin obstructs one's vision. "The minds of men," says Augustine, "are obscured by familiarity with darkness, which covers them in the night of sins and evil habits, so that they cannot perceive in a way suitable to the clearness and purity of reason." [3]

Hence it is not only a most wholesome provision but also quite necessary that the dazzled eye should be brought "into the light of truth under the congenial shade of authority." [4] It is, of course, not until God's grace has made possible the act of faith that the mind is ready even to believe,[5] but after grace has been given it is necessary for faith to purify and strengthen the mind before it is prepared for the divine illumination. It is the degree of faith, moreover, that determines the extent of the illumination. If, therefore, it seems "wretched to be deceived by authority" it is surely more wretched not to be moved at all.[1]

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[1] De doctr. christ. II, XXI, 49.

[2] De magistro XIV, 46.

[3] De moribus eccl. cath. II, 3.

[4] Ibid.

[5] De util. cred. XIV, 31.

We have the right to examine and defend by reason whatever has "its starting point either in the bodily senses or in the intuitions of the mind." On the other hand, that which we have not experienced through our bodily senses and have not been able to reach through the intellect, "must undoubtedly be believed on the testimony of those witnesses by whom the Scriptures, justly called divine, were written: and who by divine assistance were enabled, either through bodily senses or intellectual perception, to see or to foresee the things in question." [2]

There is nothing unusual in this procedure. "For," says Augustine, "if we attain the knowledge of present objects by the testimony of our own senses whether internal or external, then regarding objects remote from our own senses, we need others to bring their testimony, since we cannot know them by our own, and we credit the persons to whom the objects have been or are sensibly present. Accordingly, as in the case of visible objects which we have not seen, we trust those who have (and likewise with all sensible objects), so in the case of things that are perceived by the mind and spirit, i.e., which are remote from our own interior sense, it behooves us to trust those who have seen them set in that incorporeal light or abidingly contemplate them." [1]

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[1] De util. cred. XVI, 34. Cf. "Melius est enim quamvis nondum visum, credere quod verum est, quam putare te verum videre quod falsum est." Epist. CXX, II, 8.

[2] Enchiridion, IV. Cf. De civ. dei XIX, 18.

It ought also to be obvious that the shortness of man's life and the limitations of his physical strength and intellectual power urgently demand the use of authority. There are innumerable questions, says Augustine, "the solution of which is not to be demanded before we believe, lest life be finished by us in unbelief." [2] On the other hand, once "the Christian faith has been thoroughly received these questions ought to be studied with the utmost diligence for the pious satisfaction of the minds of believers. Whatever is discovered by such study ought to be imparted to others without vain self-complacency. If anything still remains hidden, we must bear with patience an imperfection of knowledge which is not prejudicial to salvation." [3]

Authority then takes precedence over reason and the Augustinian motto becomes *"Crede ut intel-*

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[1] De civ. dei XI, 3. Cf. the argument from friendship: "dic mihi . . . amici tui erga te voluntatem quibus oculis vides? Nulla enim voluntas corporeis oculis videri potest. . . . Amici faciem cernis corpore tuo, fidem tuam cernis animo tuo: amici vero non abs te amatur fides, si non in te mutuo illa sit fides, qua credas quod in illo nono vides." De fide re. quae non vid. I, 2. Cf. Ibid II, 4 and V, 8; De util. cred. X, 23-24; Epist. CXLVII, II, 7 and III, 8.

[2] Epist. CII, 38.

[3] Ibid.

*ligas.*"[1] In order to have Biblical support for this Augustine quotes one of the Latin translations of Isaiah VII, 9, *"nisi credideritis, non intelligetis"* (if you will not believe you shall not understand).[2] As a complement to this Augustine makes use of the command "Seek and ye shall find"[3] and urges the earnest use of reason in seeking to understand what one believes.[4]

Although subordinating reason to authority in matters of revealed religion Augustine does not rob reason of all independence. On matters that fall under the class of *scientia* as opposed to *sapientia,* reason is quite free, although, as we have already seen, faith is not without its place even there. Human knowledge is limited, to be sure, but it is nevertheless certain. In fact, reason and the senses can both be trusted. So long, moreover, as we believe in Christ and are loyal to the Christian faith, "we may without blame entertain doubts regarding some things which we have perceived neither by sense nor by reason, and which have not been revealed to us by the canonical Scriptures, or come to our knowledge through witnesses whom it is absurd to disbelieve." [1]

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[1] In Joan. evang., Tr. XXIX, 6; XL, 9; Sermo XLIII, III, 4; XLIII, VII, 9; De trin. VIII, V, 8.

[2] Sermo XLIII, VI, 7; CXVIII, 1; De lib. arb. II, II, 5; De magistro XI, 37; In Joan. evang., Tr. XXVII, 7; XXIX, 6; De trin. XV, II, 2; VII, VI; Contra Faustum Man. IV, II, Epist. CXX, I, 3; Enarr. in Ps. CXVIII, XVIII, 3. Cf. "Item illud ejusdem Isaiae prophetae, Nisi credideritis, non intelligetis; alius interpretatus est, Nisi credideritis, non permanebitis: quis horum verba secutus est, nisi exemplaria linguae praecedentis legantur, incertum est. Sed tamen ex utroque magnum aliquid insinuatur scienter legentibus." De doctr. christ. II, XII, 17. While aware of the two translations of the passage Augustine apparently did not realize how serious a mistranslation the "non intelligetis" was. The authorized English version reads, "If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established."

[3] Matthew VII, 7.

[4] De lib. arb. II, II, 6. Cf. De trin. IX, I, 1; Epist. CXX, I, 2-3, Enarr. in Ps. CXVIII, XVIII, 3; De vera relig. XXIV, 45.

In general, says Augustine, there are three classes of things to be believed. The first consists of those that are always believed and never known, like human exploits, events of history, etc., at which one is not personally present. The second consists of those which are believed and known at the same time, like mathematical relationships and other self-evident propositions of human reason. The third consists of those that are first believed and afterwards understood, like the Christian dogmas and mysteries.[2]

While in this third class one first believes and then seeks to understand, there is a real sense in which reason precedes as well as follows faith. "For," says Augustine, "who does not see that thinking is prior to believing? For no one believes anything until he has first thought that it ought to be believed. For however suddenly, however rapidly some thoughts fly before the will to believe, and however swiftly the latter follows so as to attend them, as it were, in closest conjunction, it is yet necessary that everything which is believed should be believed after thought has preceded; although even belief itself is nothing else but thinking with assent. Not everyone who thinks, believes, since indeed, many think in order that they may not believe; but everyone who believes, thinks, both thinks in believing and believes in thinking."[1]

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[1] De civ. dei XIX, 18.

[2] De div. quaest. LXXXIII, Qu. XLVIII.

The very principle that in matters of religion faith precedes reason has to be demonstrated by reason. If one grants the principle to be sound (as judged by reason), the reason persuading us precedes faith.[2] As a matter of fact, we could not believe at all were it not for the fact that we have rational minds.[3] We not only must know what it is we are to believe before we can believe it[4] but we have the right to examine the claims of an authority before submitting ourselves to it.[5]

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[1] "Quis enim non videat, prius esse cogitare quam credere? Nullus quippe credit aliquid, nisi prius cogitaverit esse credendum. Quamvis enim raptim, quamvis celerrime credendi voluntatem quaedam cogitationes antevolent, moxque illa ita sequatur, ut quasi conjunctissima comitetur; necesse est tamen ut omnia quae creduntur, praeveniente cogitatione credantur. Quanquam et ipsum credere, nihil aliud est, quam cum assensione cogitare. Non enim omnis quid cogitat, credit; cum ideo cogitent plerique, ne credant: sed cogitat omnis qui credit, et credendo cogitat, et cogitando credit." De praedest. sanct. II, 5. [2] Epist. CXX, I, 3.

[3] "Cum etiam credere non possemus nisi rationales animas haberemus." Ibid. Cf. Enarr. in Ps. CXVIII, XVIII, 3.

[4] Sermo XLIII, VII, 9.

[5] "Quanquam neque auctoritatem ratio penitus deserit, cum consideratur cui sit credendum." De vera relig. XXIV, 45. "Sed nos-

There is, then, nothing irrational in Augustine's use of authority. Faith is demanded because it is a necessary condition to knowledge. It is the starting point of knowledge,[1] the seeking of which understanding is the finding,[2] the deserving of which understanding is the reward,[3] the beginning of which truth is the end.[4]

Any conflict for Augustine between reason and revelation is impossible because God is the ground of both. Faith, like wisdom, is dependent on God's illumination and grace.[5] God gives its beginning as well as its completion, bestowing it freely and not for any merit,[6] and giving it to some while withholding it from others.[7] If, therefore, we are permitted to think or believe it is because of God's action. He is our sufficiency and the source of our knowledge and faith.[8]

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trum est considerare, quibus vel hominibus vel libris credendum est ad colendum recte Deum, quae una salus est." Ibid XXV, 46.

[1] De trin. IX, I, 1.

[2] Ibid XV, II, 2.

[3] In Joan. evang., Tr. XLVIII, 1.

[4] De trin. IV, XVIII, 24.

[5] De div. quaest. ad Simpl., Qu. II, 7.

[6] De nat. et gratia II, 2.

[7] De praedest. sanct. VIII, 16. Cf. In Joan. evang., Tr. XXIX, 6.

[8] Ibid II, 5.

# CHAPTER IV

## PROOFS OF THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

THE existence of God was for Augustine such a profound conviction that it may fairly be regarded as a primary postulate of his thinking. In all his mental and spiritual wanderings, even when feeling the lure of Academic Skepticism, it never occurred to him to doubt the fact of God's existence. "No contentiousness of blasphemous questionings," he tells us, "of all that multitude which I had read in the self-contradicting philosophers, could wring this belief from me, 'That Thou are' whatsoever Thou wert (what I knew not) and 'That the government of human things belongs to Thee." This I believed, sometimes more strongly, more weakly otherwhiles; yet I ever believed both that Thou wert and hadst a care for us; though I was ignorant, both what was to be thought of Thy substance, and what way led or led back to Thee." [1]

So sure was Augustine of God's existence that he felt it was not a debatable question. He believed that no rational creature "so long as it makes use of its reason" can be entirely ignorant of God. "With the exception of a few in whom nature has become outrageously depraved," he says, "the whole race of man acknowledges God as the maker of this world." [1] With everyone in full possession of his faculties admitting the existence of God, it is evident that logical proofs are purely gratuitous.

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[1] Conf. VI, V, 7-8.

If any should say that they deny God's existence, Augustine asks, "Why should I consider the method of dealing with them, when it is doubtful whether they ought to be dealt with at all?" [2] According to Augustine, such men are so lost in vice and so corrupted and degraded by sin that they have been made blind to the good and the true and have become veritable fools.[3] This being true, it is obvious that to persuade them of God's existence would require an entirely different starting point and treatment from that in which he is usually engaged. He addresses himself ordinarily not to depraved but to normal men, "who do not deny the existence of God, and who, moreover, allow that human affairs are not disregarded by Him." [4]

With this point of view, it is too much to expect that Augustine, who is seldom a systematic writer, should state the proofs of God's existence in any orderly or systematic form. On the other hand, his rich and repeated discussions on the nature of God and man's knowledge of him involved many of the same steps necessary to establish his existence, and thus made it inevitable that Augustine should express many indirect and occasional direct proofs.

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[1] In Joan. evang., Tr. CVI, XVII, 4. Cf. Sermo CXXVI, II, 3; Enarr. in Ps. LXXIII, 25; and CIII, I, 1.

[2] De moribus eccl. cath. VI, 10.

[3] Enarr. in Ps. XIII, 2; and LII, 2.

[4] De moribus eccl. cath. VI, 10.

As a matter of fact, all of the classic proofs of God's existence may be found in the works of Augustine, although seldom in logical form. They may be divided into seven main classes: (I) from universal consent, (II) from the Holy Scriptures, (III) from the very idea of God (the ontological argument), (IV) from the witness of the inner reason or soul, (V) from contingency, (VI) from measure, order and beauty, and (VII) from the gradations of existence and perfection. These are not, however, to be regarded as entirely independent of one another or as of equal cogency and significance.

The first proof of God's existence, from universal consent, has already been briefly mentioned. Augustine insisted that some knowledge of God is a normal and universal experience in the life of man. God, he declares, is one "Whom it is permitted to no one to know as He is and whom no one is permitted not to know."[1] It is perhaps going too far to say that the agreement concerning God's existence is entirely unanimous. A few men deny it and so rob the argument from universal consent of part of its force.

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[1] "Quem nulli licet, ut est, cognoscere; et quem nemo permittitur ignorare." Enarr. in Ps. LXXIV, 9.

Augustine shows, however, that no man who makes use of his reason denies there is a God. It is only the depraved man, the insane man, the fool who says it and he dares to say it only in his heart. Augustine points out that, "Even certain sacrilegious and abominable philosophers, who entertain perverse and false notions of God, have not dared to say, 'There is no God.' "[1] The fool alone says it and his folly is due to the degradation of his soul. To love the world and not to love God is to corrupt and blind the mind, for, says Augustine, since these fools "did not esteem it good to keep God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a false power of perceiving."[2] Only a few, however, are discovered of such great impiety;[3] "rare is the man who says in his heart, 'There is no God.' "[4]

In addition to the universal testimony of man concerning God's existence we have the testimony of the Bible. In the book of Genesis it is written that "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." To be sure, the author of this sentence was not present in person at the creation but the fact, insists Augustine, was revealed to him by God.[5] We have more in the Bible, however, than the authoritative declaration that God exists,[6] for we also have the written testimony of many men who say that they lived with the Son of God and saw deeds performed "which could never have been done if there were no God." [1] Again, we have the amazing record in the Old Testament of those prophets of God who "have not only given the congruous answer on subjects regarding which they were consulted at the special time, but who also, in the case of subjects respecting which they were not consulted and which related to the universal race of men and all nations have announced prophetically so long a time before the event those very things of which we now read and which indeed we behold." [2] The fulfilment of these predictions testifies to the existence of the Divine Being who inspired those prophets and guarantees that he is the one true God.

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[1] Enarr. in Ps. XIII, 2. Cf. Ibid LXXIV, 9; De civ. dei V, IX.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid LII, 2. Cf. Sermo LXIX, II, 3; LXX, 23; and CCLXI.

[5] De civ. dei, XI, IV.

[6] De trin. XV, IV, 6.

One may point out, however, that neither of the proofs we have thus far stated is convincing. Can a proof be given by reason alone and without appeal to authority? Augustine's answer is that while we ought to accept in faith God's existence, we may also come to a sure, although incomplete knowledge of him through reason.[3] The fact that the pagan philosophers believed in the existence of God is an evidence that it may be known by reason outside of all revelation and all faith. This also indicates that there is no conflict between reason and faith. On the other hand, the shortest and surest road to a knowledge of God is by faith and not by reason. Reason is a dark and uncertain path on which one may easily lose one's way. It may be taken if one does not know the way of faith, but it is not recommended. Faith should in every case precede the work of reason. One should first believe that God exists, after which the rational character of one's belief may be quickly shown.[1]

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[1] De lib. arb. II, II, 5.

[2] De serm. dom. in monte I, XIX, 27.

[3] De lib. arb. II, XV, 39. Cf. De vera relig. XXIX, 52.

Augustine believes that in all the rational proofs of God's existence an element of faith is a necessary prerequisite. The ontological proof, for example, is a demonstration of God's existence from the very idea of God and is therefore a proof by reason alone. It produces conviction, however, only in the mind of him who already holds by faith what the demonstration attempts to prove by reason.

When men think of God, says Augustine, they endeavor to conceive of a nature "than which nothing more excellent or more exalted exists. . . . They place Him above all visible and bodily natures and even above all intelligent and spiritual natures that are subject to change. All, however, strive emulously to exalt the excellence of God; nor could anyone be found to believe that any being to whom there exists a superior is God. And so all concur in believing that God is that which excels in dignity all other subjects."[1] That God is, therefore, he continues, "the Supreme Good, and that than which nothing can be or can be conceived better, we must either understand or believe, if we wish to keep clear of blasphemy."[2] As the supreme Good, he is "not good by a good that is other than himself, but the good of all good."[3] Again, as the supreme good he must be immutable, incorruptible, impenetrable and inviolable, for these are all implied in the highest good.[4] He can only properly be described "as having supreme and original existence," for "that exists in the highest sense of the word which continues always the same, which is throughout like itself, which cannot in any part be corrupted or changed, which is not subject to time, which admits of no variation in its present as compared with its former condition. This is existence in its true sense."[5] This, however, is true of God alone.[6] Since, therefore, the very idea of God is that of true existence he cannot be conceived as not existing.[7]

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[1] De lib. arb. II, II, 5-6. Cf. Étienne Gilson, Introduction a l'Étude de Saint Augustin. p. 14-15.

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[1] "Ut aliquid quo nihil melius sit atque sublimius illa cogitatis conetur attingere," etc. De doctr. christ. I, VII, 7.

[2] "Summum bonum omnino, et quo esse aut cogitari melius nihil possit, aut intelligendus, aut credendus Deus est, si blasphemius carere cogitamus." De moribus Man. XI, 24. Cf. De duabus animabus contra Man. VIII, 10; De nat. boni contra Man. I.

[3] De trin. VIII, III, 4.

[4] "Esse incommutabilem, et impenetrabilem et incorruptibilem, et inviolabilem: non enim erit summum bonum; id est enim quo nihil est melius." De moribus Man. III, 5.

[5] Ibid I, 1.

[6] Ibid.

[7] This last step is clearly implied but is not expressed. This

In other words, supreme goodness and most real being both mean that which is subject to no corruption. The order of existence and the order of perfection coincide. As one ascends the scale of goodness one also ascends the scale of being. The highest good is, then, the most real being and the only conception of God that is not absurd and unworthy is that of life itself.[1] Reason demonstrates, therefore, not merely that God ought to exist, but that he does exist.[2]

It is evident that all the elements of Anselm's ontological argument may be found here. While the form of the *Proslogion* proof is undoubtedly original, the argument itself is but a new arrangement of Augustine's thought. The proof is, of course, implicit in the *a priori* approach of both philosophers. Both believe that faith should precede reason; both identify the supreme good and most real being; and both are justified by their realism in proceeding from thought to existence. The proof involves the whole metaphysical system of both Anselm and Augustine.

The ontological proof indicates that God may be

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is probably due to the fact that while this thought recurs again and again, it is always stated as a description of God's nature and never as a proof of his existence.

[1] "Et quoniam omnes qui de Deo cogitant, vivum aliquid cogitant, illi soli possunt non absurda et indigna existimare de Deo, qui vitam ipsam cogitant." De doctr. christ. I, VIII, 8.

[2] Epist. CLX, 1-3; CLXII, 2. Cf. De vera relig. XXXI, 58.

found by an analysis of the idea of existence. This is, however, not the only convincing proof of his existence, for Augustine believes that one can demonstrate that God exists either by looking within the human soul or examining the created creatures of the physical world.

The existence of God, says Augustine, is proclaimed by all creation but there is knowledge of him only in the mind and soul of man.[1] As we have already observed, the depraved and the foolish cannot see God, because sin impairs their vision. On the other hand, God "is everywhere present to the inner eye when it is sound and clear." [2] If, then, we would know that God exists we need only turn within ourselves, looking away from the things of sense and letting God lead us until, with the eye of our souls, above our minds we see the Unchangeable Light. There are seven steps or grades of the soul which are traversed before one is prepared to see this light of God. The soul is successively the principle of movement, sensation, knowledge, morality, tranquillity, approach or a beginning of contemplation, and last of all, contemplation.[3] Not until the soul has passed through these ascending steps and has been cleansed and healed does it know the joys of contemplating the divine wisdom. The contemplation is, however, not of God himself but rather "a kind of light, and melody, and fragrance, and meat, and embracement" [1] which is from God and which testifies that God exists. This light which is above the senses and above memory, is the light of Truth. It is, then, in the contemplation of Truth that one discovers God. "For where I found Truth," says Augustine, "there found I my God, the Truth itself; which since I learned, I have not forgotten." [2] In the contemplation of Truth God seems to speak and the heart hears him.[3] So sure it this witness of the heart that one who has once beheld and heard it can never again doubt the existence of God or Truth. After this experience, Augustine declares, "It is easier to doubt that I live than that Truth is not." [4]

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[1] Enarr. in Ps. XCIX, 5 and XLI, 7.

[2] De doctr. christ. I, XII, 11.

[3] "Ascendentibus igitur sursum versus, primus actus, docendi causa, dicatur animatio; secundus, sensus; tertius, ars; quartus, virtus; quintus, tranquillitas; sextus, ingressio; septimus, contemplatio. Possunt et hoc modo appellari: de corpore; per corpus; circa corpus; ad seipsam; in seipsa; ad Deum; apud Deum." De quant. animae XXXV, 79. Cf. the steps "timor, pietas, scientia,

Augustine makes it clear that this last proof of God's existence is only for him whose inner eye is

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fortitudo, consilium, purgatio cordis, and sapientia" of De doctr. christ. II, VII, 9-11. Professor Edward Kennard Rand believes that the ascending heavens of Dante's *Paradiso* were inspired, in part at least, by the De quant. animae, and especially by the passage quoted above, in which Augustine distinguishes the seven steps by which the soul climbs to its perfection. Cf. Edward Kennard Rand, Founders of the Middle Ages. Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1928. pp. 259-266.

[1] Conf. X, VI, 8.

[2] Ibid X, XXIV, 35.

[3] Ibid VII, X, 16. Cf. X, XXV, 36.

[4] "Faciliusque dubitarem vivere me, quam non esse veritatem." Ibid VII, X, 16.

sound and clear. For those whose inward sight is weak and dim the witness of the heart is invisible but the existence of God may nevertheless be shown by an examination of the created world through the outward eye.[1]

The argument from contingency is perhaps the first of the proofs furnished by a study of the "creature." The created character of the world implies a creator. As we scrutinize the various works of God, Augustine tells us, "we may detect, as it were, His footprints, now more and now less distinct even in those things that are beneath us." "They could not so much as exist," he continues, "or be bodied forth in any shape, or follow or observe any law, had they not been made by Him who supremely is, and is supremely good and supremely wise." [2]

The change and dissolution to which the whole visible world is subject is a direct evidence of its contingent character.[3] Real being means to be eternally, to exist eternally unchanged. The visible world must, therefore, enjoy only a derived existence from Him who truly and supremely is.[4] All nature proclaims the fact that it did not make itself. All the heavens and the earth declare "We are not God, but He made us."[1] Our senses show us only the created, only the derived, only the effect of the cause. To find the uncreated, the original existence, the uncaused or first cause of the world we must make an inference from our sense experience by means of the mind. It is a conclusion reached by the inner man through the ministry of the outer, by the mind through the senses of the body.[2] From the immediate cause the mind is led to the first cause, who is the invisible word of God.[3]

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[1] De doctr. christ. I, XII, 11. "At vero quidam philosophi huius mundi exstiterunt, et inquisierunt Creatorem per creaturam: quia potest inveniri per creaturam." In Joan. evang., Tr. II, 4. Cf. Enarr. in Ps. LXXIII, 25.

[2] De civ. dei XI, XXVIII.

[3] Conf. XI, IV, 6. Cf. De trin. III, X, 21.

[4] In Joan. evang. Tract. II, 2.

The order in the universe is also an evidence of the work of God. All changes and movements in the world are well-ordered,[4] reflecting a purpose and a plan. Take, for example, the soul of any animal: "see how it regulates the huge body, puts forth the senses, the eyes to see, the ears to hear, the nostrils to smell, the taste to discern flavors,—the members, in short, to execute their respective functions."[5] Again, observe, says Augustine, how carefully the whole creation is administered; every grain of seed reveals the care and plan of God, and the government of the world is a veritable miracle of order and purpose.[6] Measure, form and order demand a supreme measure, a supreme form and a supreme order and must be regarded as generic goods in things made by God. God must, however, be conceived as "above every measure of the creature, above every form, above every order," above not in space but by "ineffable and singular potency." [1]

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[1] Conf. X, VI, 9. Cf. Enarr. in Ps. CXLIV, 13 and XXXVI, 12; De trin. XV, IV, 6; Sermo CXLI, II, 2; CCXLI, I, 1; and CLXXXXVII, 1; In Joan. evang. Tr. III, 5.

[2] Ibid X, VI, 9.

[3] De gen. ad litt. IV, XXXII, 49; De trin. III, III, 8.

[4] De civ. dei XI, IV.

[5] In Joan. evang., Tr. VIII, 2.

[6] Ibid XXIV, 1; Contra Acad. I, I, 1; De ordine I, V-VI, 12-16.

The fact of beauty is another testimony of God's existence. Beauty of form in the created world seems to cry out to Augustine that it is a derived and not a self-created beauty.[2] He repeats with approval the argument of Plotinus, who in speaking of providence and the beauty of flowers and foliage, "proves that from the supreme God, whose beauty is unseen and ineffable, providence reaches down even to these earthly things here below; and argues that all these frail and perishing things would not have so exquisite and elaborate a beauty, were they not fashioned by Him whose unseen and unchangeable beauty continually pervades all things." [3]

Augustine's favorite demonstration of God's existence is one which uses parts of several of the preceding proofs in one convincing argument from the gradations of existence and perfection. It is found again and again in the works of Augustine and is the only proof that is expressed in logical form and systematically developed. It is found, as we have already observed, in the *De ordine* and *De immortalitate amimae*[1] but is first carefully developed in the fifty-fourth question of *De diversis quaestionibus LXXXIII.* Because of its significance the argument will be quoted in full. "All that is," says Augustine, "either exists in that mode always, or it does not. And all soul is better than body for all that gives life is better than that which is given life. No one doubts, moreover, that the body is given life by the soul, not the soul by the body. What, however, is not body, and nevertheless is something, either is soul or is something better than the soul, for nothing is worse than all body; since if anyone should speak of the matter whence body is made, seeing that it lacks all species, nothing is said. On the other hand, between body and soul, we cannot discover what is better than body and worse than soul. Indeed, if there were any middle being, either it would derive its life from soul or give life to soul, or neither of the two. If anything is vivified by soul, it is body, if it gives life to the soul it is better than the soul. On the other hand what gives life to the body is soul; what is given life by the body is nothing. Again, if it neither knows life nor gives forth life, either it is nothing at all or it is something better than body and soul, although whether there is any such thing in the nature of things is another question. Now, in the meanwhile, reason discovers nothing between body and soul, which is better than body, worse than soul. What, however, is better than all soul, we call God, to whom whoever knows him is joined. That which is known is true but not all that is believed is true. That, moreover, which is true and yet is cut off from the senses and the mind may indeed be believed to exist as such, but it cannot be experienced or known to be true. He, therefore, who knows God is joined to God. The rational soul, moreover, does know God, for he knows what is always of the same mode and does not ever suffer change. On the other hand, both body and soul suffer change, the body through time and place and the rational soul itself in that it is sometimes wise and sometimes foolish. What, however, is always of the same mode, is truly better than that which is not so. It has also been shown that there is nothing better than the rational soul except God. When, therefore, man knows anything which is always of the same mode, he knows the unchangeable itself without doubt. This, however, is truth itself, and because in knowing truth the soul is joined to it, and since this is the good of the soul, rightly is that accepted to be which is written, "For me to cling to God is Good." [1]

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[1] De nat. boni contra Man. III.

[2] Enarr. in Ps. CXIV, 13; Conf. X, VI, 9.

[3] De civ. dei X, XIV. Cf. Sermo CCXLI, II, 2.

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[1] De ordine II, XIX, 49-50; De immort. animae VIII, 14.

The argument has seven clearly recognizable steps. First, the soul is higher in the order of existence than body. Second, there is nothing lower in the scale of existence than body or matter. Third, there is no intermediate being between body and soul. Fourth, since the soul is the highest part of man, and since man is the highest creature we know, if there is a higher being than the soul we may call it God. Fifth, if anyone knows God he is joined to him. Sixth, while the rational soul, like the body, is subject to change, it finds something in itself which exists always in the same mode, suffering no change. Seventh, since there are but two orders of existence, the changing and the unchanging, and since the unchanging is higher and better than the changing, something has been found which is better than the soul and which, therefore, we may call God. It is God who is the unchangeable truth to which man's soul is joined by its knowledge of it.

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[1] De div. quaest. LXXXIII, Qu. LIV.

In the argument it is assumed without question that the unchangeable is higher and better than the changeable. No one, thinks Augustine, would be so silly as to ask why this is so. If, however, one did ask it, he would answer that "the very truth about which he asks, how I know it? is unchangeably fixed in the minds of all men, and presented to their common contemplation. The man, moreover, who does not see it is like a blind man in the sun, whom it profits nothing that the splendor of its light, so clear and so near, is poured into his very eye-balls. The man, on the other hand, who sees, but shrinks from this truth, is weak in his mental vision from dwelling too long among the shadows of the flesh."[1]

The argument further implies that we must have caught sight of the unchangeable itself at some time in our existence, since otherwise, says Augustine, we "could never with entire confidence prefer a life which is unchangeably wise to one which is subject to change."[2] The proof also assumes that the unchangeable element could not have been created by the changing mind in which it is found. If man is a being subject to change, any unchanging element, like the idea of perfect order, perfect beauty or absolute law, testifies to the presence of "a law above our mind which is called truth."[3] Our mind is not this truth and our body is certainly not. It is then something in our mind yet also above and beyond our mind. Being unchangeable it must be set over against our changeable mind as something quite different, something far better. If, however, it is better than the mind or soul it must be God.[4]

The character of this unchanging element is discussed in the *De vera religione*. There is in the mind, he reminds us, the idea of perfection in truth, goodness and unity. We call things good or beautiful not only in comparison with each other but also by reference to an idea of absolute perfection. A confused idea of absolute perfection is in our minds before we begin to judge things to be beautiful or good. The things of the world, created perfections, fail, moreover, to satisfy us. While we have never seen absolute perfection we feel that these things are not perfect. At the same time their unity, truth, goodness, or beauty imply an underived unity and truth, an absolute goodness, a perfect beauty.[1]

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[1] De doctr. christ. I, 9.

[2] Ibid I, 8.

[3] De vera relig. XXX, 56.

[4] "Nec jam illud ambigendum est, incommutabilem naturam, quae supra rationalem animam sit, Deum esse." Ibid XXXI, 57.

In other words, the idea of perfection or of immutability is at first confused and vague, but it is nevertheless real. All that is required to prove God's existence is to clarify this idea of perfection and immutability and point out its significance. The connection between this and the ontological argument is apparent.

The most highly developed form of the argument of degrees of existence is found in the second book of *De libero arbitrio*. Here Augustine, for the first and only time, deliberately devotes himself to the task of finding a convincing rational proof of God's existence. After cautioning his friend Evodius that even here faith must precede reason he states the argument in dialogue form.

Of our own existence, he says, we may be quite sure, for the very fact of error implies the existence of him who errs.[2] I know, however, not only that I exist, but also that I live and that I know.[1] These three distinctions correspond to the classes of visible creatures: that which is but has no life, like the stone, that which is and lives but does not understand, like the animal, and that which is and lives and understands, like the rational mind of man.[2] Man stands first among the visible creatures because of reason. There is nothing in man more sublime than reason.

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[1] De vera relig. XXXI-XXXII, 57-60.

[2] "Cum utique si non esses, falli omnino non posses." De lib. arb. II, III, 7.

"Well, then," continues Augustine, "if we could find something which you not only do not doubt to be, but also to be more excellent than our reason itself, will you hesitate to call that, whatever it is, God?"[3] Evodius does not commit himself for he prefers to define God as "that to which nothing is superior" rather than that to which his reason is inferior. It is finally understood, however, that if Augustine can prove that something exists above reason and that there is nothing above it, Evodius will have ② to recognize that God's existence has been demonstrated.[4]

Augustine then proceeds to analyze the intellectual process, distinguishing an interior sense from the five senses and the work of reason from that of the ③ Δable Things interior sense.[5] He also distinguishes between our knowledge of changeable things, like food or drink or earth or sky, and our knowledge of things that are not subject to change, like numbers and the laws of numbers.[1] If we examine, for example, the proposition that seven and three are ten, we find that they are not only ten now but ten forever. They can never be anything but ten. Moreover, one does not think that seven and three ought to be ten but simply that they are ten. It is an affirmation of an eternal truth.[2] The whole domain of mathematics is subject to fixed and immutable laws of reason, which are understood "by an interior light which the corporeal senses do not know." [3]

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[1] De lib. arb. II, III, 7.
[2] Ibid II, VI, 13.
[3] Ibid II, VI, 14.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Ibid II, III, 7 and II, IV, 10.

After hinting at the close connection between our knowledge of numbers and wisdom Augustine stops to consider the nature of wisdom, without which no one is happy, and a notion of which, like the idea of happiness, is impressed upon our hearts long before we have achieved it.[4] What is this wisdom which we all desire? Is it not truth, "in which the supreme good is discerned and known?" [5] Augustine answers that it is and adds that this truth is one and common to all. Truth demands that in all cases the worse be subordinated to the better and that an uncorrupted thing be regarded as better than one that is corrupted, an eternal thing than one that is temporal, and an inviolable than one that is violable. All the rules of wisdom are true and unchangeable, and are present in common to all minds able to contemplate them.[1] This, however, was also true of the laws of numbers. It is evident then that both numbers and wisdom are immutably true.[2]

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[1] De lib. arb. II, VIII, 20.

[2] Ibid II, VIII, 21. Cf. Ibid II, XII, 34; Epist. CLXII, 2, and De vera relig. XXXI, 57 and 58.

[3] Ibid II, VIII, 23.

[4] Ibid II, IX, 26. Cf. De trin. VIII, III, 4; X, I-V, 1-7; XIV, XIV, 18; XV, III, 5; De immort. animae IV, 6; Conf. X, X-XII, 17-19.

[5] Ibid.

Now this truth which is both wisdom and numbers and which is single and common to all is either more excellent than our mind or equal to it or inferior to it. It cannot, however, be inferior to our minds else we should judge of it rather than according to it. Again it cannot be equal for to be equal it too would have to be changeable. Since, therefore, truth is neither inferior nor equal it must be superior to the mind.[3] Since, however, something has been proved to be more excellent than reason, Evodius must confess that God's existence has been demonstrated.[4] "For," concludes Augustine, "if there is something still more excellent, that rather is God: if, however, there is nothing, then truth itself is God. Whether therefore that more excellent something is or is not, you nevertheless cannot deny that God is: which was the question set to be discussed and treated by us. For if this affects you, that in the sacrosanct discipline of Christ we accept in faith the doctrine that God is the Father of Wisdom, remember that we also accept this in faith, that equal to the eternal Father is the Wisdom which is begotten of him. Whence nothing further need be inquired, but only held with unshaken faith. For God is, and he is truly and supremely. This we not only hold now undoubted in faith, as I believe, but we also touch it in a sure, although still very tenuous form of knowledge."[1]

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[1] De lib. arb. II, X, 28-29. [2] Ibid II, XI, 32.

[3] Ibid II, XII, 34. Cf. De ordine II, XV, 43; II, XIX, 50; De gen. contra Man. II, XVI, 24; De vera relig. LII, 101; De div. quaest. LXXXIII, Qu. I; De doctr. christ. I, VIII, 8; II, XXXVIII, 56-57; Conf. VII, X, 16; De trin. XII, II, 2; De civ. dei VIII, VI.

[4] Ibid II, XIII, 35.

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[1] De lib. arb. II, XV, 39.

# CHAPTER V

## GOD: THE SOURCE OF BEING

THE presence of God in the world is as evident as the brightness of the sun, as impossible to disbelieve as the fact of our own existence. We recognize that he is the infinite and necessary artificer of every finite and contingent thing, the perfect order and supernal beauty beheld in every orderly arrangement and every beautiful form, the immutable truth and eternal goodness revealed in every true thought and every good deed. Yet for all our certainty that he exists we are powerless to describe adequately his divine nature. He transcends all human measurements, defies all human description.[1] Our noblest words are soiled by the touch of earth: they are not worthy to describe deity.[2] We scarcely dare to call him the unspeakable, for even this is to speak of him and thus to speak unworthily.[1]

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[1] Contra advers. legis et prophet I, XX, 40.

[2] "Quotidiana verba occurrunt, et sordidata sunt omnia vilissimis rebus." De ordine II, XIX, 51.

"Omnia possunt dici de Deo, et nihil digne dicitur de Deo." In Joan. evang., Tr. XIII, 5.

"Nihil enim de Deo digne dici potest. Nobis tamen ut nutriamur, et ad ea perveniamus quae nullo humano sermone dici possunt, ea dicuntur quae capere possumus." De gen. contra Man. I, VIII, 14. Cf. Ibid I, IX, 15; I, XIV, 20; I, XXIII, 41; De div. quaest. ad Simpl. II, Qu. II, 1; Contra advers. legis et prophet. I, XX, 40; Contra Adimant. Man. discip. VII, 4; XI; XIII, 2; XXVIII, 2; Sermo CCCXLI, VII, 9; Collatio cum Maximino IX.

It is not that we have no knowledge of God [2] but rather that words are of too coarse a texture to clothe divinity. We may think of him more truly than we can speak of him, although he exists, of course, even more truly than he is thought.[3] We do not claim that we can see God with our bodily eyes but we do believe that we behold his truth and wisdom by intellectual vision.[4] This does not mean, however, that our knowledge of him even by intellectual vision is in any sense complete. In fact if anyone makes such a claim we may be sure that what he says he comprehends is not God.[5]

Since God is ineffable it is clear that we shall find it easier to say what he is not than what he is.[6] We may say with certainty that he is not a corporeal body or any visible thing that moves on the earth or in the sea or flies through the air or shines in the sky. We are sure that he is not to be identified with "Angels, Virtues, Powers, Archangels, Thrones, Seats, or Principalities."[1] We also know that the human soul is not to be thought a part of God,[2] for God must be sharply distinguished from every part of the contingent and changing world he has created.[3]

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[1] De doctr. christ. I, VI, 6.

[2] De div. quaest. LXXXIII. Qu. LX.

[3] "Verius enim cogitatur Deus quam dicitur, et verius est quam cogitatur." De trin. VII, IV, 7. Cf. Contra epist. Man. voc. fund. XIX, 21.

[4] Epist. CXLVII. Cf. Ibid CXLVIII, I-III, 2-12.

[5] "Oculo cordis Deus incomprehensibilis . . . De Deo loquimur, quid mirum si non comprehendis? Si enim comprehendis, non est Deus. . . . Attingere aliquantum mente Deum; magna beatitudo est: comprehendere autem, omnino impossibile." Sermo CXVII, III, 5. Cf. Ibid CXVII, V, 7.

[6] "Deus ineffabilis est, facilius dicimur quid non sit quam quid sit." Enarr. in Ps. LXXXV, 12. Cf. De trin. V, I, 2.

Since it is evident that God is not an anthropomorphic being with five senses[4] we are confident that the divine mind is quite unlike the human intellect.[5] To be sure, the Scriptures often describe God in terms of human attributes in order to lead us, by the imperfect medium of human speech, from the temporal to the spiritual and from the human to the divine, but we must not think that these descriptions are to be understood as literally true. The Bible speaks, for example, of the anger of God, but does not intend that we shall liken it to the anger of men. The anger of God is not a disturbing emotion, as it is for man, but is simply "a judgment by which punishment is inflicted upon sin."[6] Just "as the sun is changed to injured eyes, and becomes as it were fierce from being mild, and hurtful from being delightful, though in itself it remains the same as it was,"[1] so the anger of God does not mean that God changes his attitude toward man, but rather that man changes his attitude toward God. Again, when God is said to repent it is merely a figure of speech to express his immutable foreknowledge, for God does not err and his decision is as inflexible as his prescience is certain. The jealousy of God may be explained as his tranquil justice; the compassion of God as his tranquil goodness.[2] In like manner, the phrase "the face of God" should be understood to mean the various ways in which he has revealed himself to men and not a part of the body similar to that which in our bodies we call by that name.[3] The Bible is under no misapprehensions with respect to God's ineffability and transcendent nature, but uses these human terms to "insinuate itself into the minds of all classes of men, whom it seeks access to for their good, that it may alarm the proud, arouse the careless, exercise the inquisitive, and satisfy the intelligent; and this it could not do if it did not first stoop and, in a manner, descend to them where they lie."[4]

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[1] Enarr. in Ps. LXXXV, 12. Cf. Contra epist. Man. voc. fund. XV, 19; Conf. X, VI, 10; De trin. VIII, II, 3.

[2] De moribus Man. XI, 21-24.

[3] De civ. dei VII, XXX.

[4] In Joan. evang., Tr. XCIX, 3. Cf. Conf. X, V, 7.

[5] De civ. dei XII, XVII; De trin. XV, XIII, 22.

[6] Ibid XV, XXV; Contra advers. legis et prophet. I, XX, 40.

It is evident that even terms like justice, goodness, and foreknowledge do not adequately describe deity. They are the best words we can find, but certainly the divine justice, goodness and foreknowledge must bear but a very dim resemblance to their human counterparts.[1] Strictly speaking, then, God's nature cannot be defined. We cannot even say that he has measure, for this would seem to speak of him as limited.[2] All that we can do is to "endeavour to place him above all visible and bodily natures and even above all intelligent and spiritual natures that are subject to change," and attempt "to reach the conception of a nature, than which nothing more excellent or more exalted exists." [3]

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[1] De civ. dei XXII, II.

[2] Ibid XV, XXV. Cf. De div. quaest. ad Simpl. II, Qu. II, 2-5; Contra advers. legis et prophet. I, XX, 40-41; Contra Adimant. Man. discip. XI, 1.

[3] Ibid XXII, XXIX. Cf. Ibid X, XIII.

[4] Ibid XV, XXV.

On the other hand, even though our thought of God falls very short of him and fails to comprehend him as he is, we do see him as Paul suggests "through a glass, darkly." [4] We are convinced that even if we have no human experience of perfect goodness and justice God nevertheless is that perfect goodness and justice. We do not believe that God is beyond goodness or justice or that he is beyond all intelligibility.[5] We are also confident that he is a God conscious of himself and of his work.[6]

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[1] Sermo CCCXLI, VII, 9.

[2] De nat. boni contra Man. XXII.

[3] De doctr. Christ. I, VII, 7.

[4] De trin. V, I, 1.

[5] He is, of course, above goodness in the sense of human virtues since virtue is a matter of conduct and physical action whereas God acts without movement.

[6] De civ. dei XI, X. Note: This is true of God the Father as well as God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. It is by no means

We feel justified, therefore, in giving certain attributes to God, even though we know the faultiness of language and the inadequacy of our thoughts. We dare to call him "most highest, most good, most potent, most omnipotent, most merciful, yet most just, most hidden, yet most present; most beautiful, yet most strong; stable, yet incomprehensible; unchangeable, yet all-changing; never new, never old; all renewing . . . ; ever working, ever at rest; still gathering; yet nothing lacking; supporting, filling, and overspreading; creating, nourishing, and maturing, seeking, yet having all things."[1] Sober reflection shows us that the many attributes ascribed to God may be reduced to these twelve: "eternal, immortal, incorruptible, unchangeable, living, wise, powerful, beautiful, righteous, good, blessed, spirit."[2] An analysis of these reveals a natural division into three series of four attributes. The first

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sure, therefore, that Augustine's God may be identified with "The One" of Plotinus, as Grandgeorge believes (Saint Augustine et le Néoplatonisme, Paris, 1896. p. 68). There is, however, no question but that Augustine used many of the negative formulas of Plotinus in indicating God's ineffability. The difference between "The One" of Plotinus and the Christian God of Augustine may be discerned not in the use of the negative formulas but in the use of positive attributes and in the doctrine of the trinity. It may also be seen, of course, in the doctrine of the incarnation, where Augustine insists (in opposition to both Philo and Plotinus) that true divinity cannot be polluted by contact with flesh. Cf. De civ. dei IX, XVI-XVII. For a criticism of Grandgeorge's position see Boyer, L'Idée de Vérité, p. 107.

[1] Conf. I, IV, 4. Cf. De div. quaest. LXXXIII, Qu. XLVI.

[2] De trin. XV, V, 8.

four, eternal, immortal, incorruptible, and unchangeable, all obviously mean eternal. The second series, living, wise, powerful, and beautiful, may all be subsumed under the attribute wise. The last series, righteous, good, blessed, and spirit, may all be reduced to that "which cannot exist even in man without the three others, viz., blessed." [1] Since, however, in the absolute simplicity of the divine nature, it is not one thing to be and another to be wise or blessed, it becomes evident that to describe God truly we must think of him as both a unity and a trinity—a trinity of eternal being, supreme wisdom, and perfect beatitude, or "the cause of existence, the ultimate reason for the understanding, and the end in reference to which the whole life is to be regulated." [2]

If, then, we inquire as to the principle of all being, all knowledge and all goodness, there is but one answer: God. The world "has its form by subsisting in him, its enlightenment by contemplating him, its joy by abiding in him." [3] The truth of this is made more apparent when we remember that Plato and all subsequent philosophers recognize the threefold division of philosophy into physics, logic and ethics.[4] Although they disagree "both regarding the nature of things and the mode of investigating truth, and of the good to which all our actions ought to tend, yet in these three great general questions all their intellectual energy is spent."[1] In their agreement then concerning the threefold aspect of reality, as well as the confession of the greatest of their number, Plato, that "God alone could be the author of nature, the bestower of intelligence, and the kindler of love by which life becomes good and blessed,"[2] we have a clear proof that the simple, immaterial, unchangeable unity who is God has expressed himself in his creation under a triune form. The natural or physical aspect of reality is thus seen to pertain especially to God the Father, the rational or logical to God the Son, and the moral or ethical to God the Holy Spirit, or to return to the three attributes we have already ascribed to God, the attribute eternal may be associated especially with God the Father, the attribute wise with God the Son, and the attribute blessed with God the Holy Spirit.

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[1] De trin. XV, V, 8.

[2] "Causa subsistendi, et ratio intelligendi, et ordo vivendi." De civ. dei VIII, IV. Cf. "principium ad quod recurrimus, et formam quam sequimur, et gratiam qua reconciliamur." De vera relig. LV, 13; and "incommutabile principium, incommutabilem sapientiam, incommutabilem charitatem." De quant. animae XXXIV, 77.

[3] Ibid XI, XXIV.

[4] Ibid XI, XXV; VIII, IV.

Any discussion of the first member of the trinity turns, therefore, about the attribute eternal and is a study of God as the source of being. The words eternal, immortal, incorruptible and unchangeable all suggest a great and perfect substance transcending every changeable creature of flesh or of soul, a substance that continues in itself unchanged. It is indeed the unchangeable and eternal character of God that warrants us in calling him the supreme and chief existence.[1]

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[1] De civ. dei XI, XXV.

[2] Ibid.

When we say that anything is subject to change we understand that it may change either for the better or for the worse. A change for the worse means a falling away from what it was, or in other words, a falling away from essence or existence. It follows that a change for the better means a turning toward a higher existence. All change for the better is, moreover, a change from disorder to order and from plurality to unity.[2] If, therefore, we try to conceive of an eternal and unchangeable being we see that such a being must be not only the highest existence but also perfect order and unity.

Or to say the same thing in a different way, "anything, whatever . . . be its excellence, if it is changeable, does not truly exist; for there is no true existence wherever non-existence has also a place." [3] "That which is called 'Is' and not only is called but is so, is unchangeable: It ever remaineth, it cannot be changed, it is in no part corruptible: It hath neither proficiency, for it is perfect, nor any deficiency, for it is eternal."[1] To say, then, that God is eternal and unchangeable means that he is that which alone truly exists. It implies that he is both the supreme existence and the fountain of all life.[2]

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[1] De moribus Man. VI, 8.

[2] "Nihil est autem, quam unum esse. Itaque in quantum quidque unitatem adipscitur, in tantum est." Ibid. Cf. Ibid I, 1; Enarr. in Ps. CI, 10; De fide et symbolo IV, 7; De civ. dei XI, X; De vera relig. XXXVI, 66; De lib. arb. II, XVI, 42; De musica VI, XVII, 56; Conf. I, VII, 12; I, XVIII, 31.

[3] In Joan. evang., Tr. XXXVIII, 10.

This in turn implies that God transcends time as well as space. Time, says Augustine, is the measure of corporeal motion and where there is no corporeal motion there is no time.[3] Since there is no motion of any kind in God there can be no experience of time. He knows neither future nor past, but only the present. For him "whatsoever is, only is."[4]

As eternal and unchangeable existence God never "generated Himself" or came into existence.[5] He always was and always will be and he remains eternally the same. On the other hand, the world has not always existed. It was created out of nothing (*ex nihilo*) at a given instant, and with its creation and the beginning of motion, time also began.[6] Why the world was made no one can say. One may be sure that it was not from any new or sudden resolution on the part of God, since it must have been a part of his unchangeable and eternal design, but no one can search out the depth of God's purpose in creating, without change of will, what had never existed before.[1] If one insists on an answer, that of Plato is perhaps as good as any, namely, that good works might be made by a good God.[2]

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[1] In epist. Joan. ad Parth., Tr. IV, 5. Cf. Conf. VII, XI, 17; De moribus Man. I; De nat. boni contra Man. XIX; Epist. CXVIII, III, 15; De civ. dei VIII, VI; In Joan. evang., Tr. XCIX, 5.

[2] De vera relig. XI, 21. Cf. Ibid XVIII, 35; De civ. dei XI, VI; XII, II; XII, XV; De nat. boni contra Man. I; De trin. V, II, 3; VIII, I, 1; De doctr. christ. I, 8; De fide et symbolo IV, VII; Conf. I, VI, 10; VII, XI, 17.

[3] Conf. XI, XI, 13; De gen. ad litt. V, V, 12.

[4] De div. quaest. LXXXIII, Qu. XIX. Cf. In Joan. evang., Tr. XCIX, 5.

[5] De trin. I, I, 1.

[6] De civ. dei XI, VI. Cf. Conf. XI, XII, 14.

What God did before the creation of the world is another insoluble problem. We dare not say that there was ever a time when the Lord God was not Lord, yet when we consider what God could be the Lord of, if there were not always some creature, we shrink from making any assertion, remembering our insignificance and our inability to know the counsel of the most high.[3] As a matter of fact, it is not so much an insoluble problem as a false one, for if God transcends the temporal process there is no "before" for God. Certainly there was no time before time began and time did not begin until the world was created. No time, then, preceded time, yet God, in whose consciousness there is neither future nor past has existed without time forever.[4]

One may ask, was God compelled to create the world? No, says Augustine, God created the world by an act of his own free will, although once willed the fact of creation became a part of the divine order and therefore eternally decreed. Since, moreover, the will of God is the ultimate principle of the world, than which nothing is higher, it is impossible to carry the inquiry any farther.[1]

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[1] De civ. dei XII, XIV. Cf. XII, XVII; XII, XX; Conf. XII, XV, 18.

[2] Ibid XI, XXI.

[3] Ibid'XII, XV. Cf. Enarr. in Ps. II, 6.

[4] Conf. XI, XIII, 15-16.

Augustine believes that both time and creation began simply by an act of will on the part of God and that all life, all intellect, all sensation, and all matter were created from nothing. He declares that there is no nature "even among the least and lowest and last of the beasts, which was not the work of him from whom has proceeded all measure, all form and all order, and without which nothing can be planned or conceived." [2] God did not create them in the sense of giving them an existence completely independent of his control, but so that they could not remain in existence for an instant unless they were sustained by him.[3] The world needs God in order to exist at all, but God does not need the world.[4] The subject requires no object to be complete, the divine ideas need no created realities to mirror their perfection. If the world were destroyed tomorrow God would lose nothing.

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[1] De div. quaest. LXXXIII, Qu. XXVIII. Why the world was created in this particular spot also passes our comprehension, says Augustine. Cf. De civ. dei XI, V.

[2] De civ. dei XI, XV. Cf. De nat. boni contra Man. XIII; De gen. ad litt. VIII, V, 9.

[3] Conf. I, VI, 10. Cf. De civ. dei VII, XXX.

[4] Contra advers. legis et prophet. I, III, 4; De gen. ad litt. VIII, VIII, 16; In Joan. evang., Tr. XI, 5.

In discussing the account of creation Augustine desires, of course, to be loyal to the Biblical account in the first chapters of the Book of Genesis. There appeared, however, to be a contradiction in the divine text, for in the first chapter a series of creations is referred to, while in the second chapter all creation is declared to have been accomplished in a single day. Augustine does not believe that the word day is to be taken literally to mean a day of twenty-four hours with a morning and evening and he also finds it impossible to believe that there were any successive creative acts by God. He is convinced that all things must have been created simultaneously (*omnia simul*) by a single act of God's will, and that at that instant, time must have begun. But while his conception of God demands this it is apparent that in a real sense the stages of created existence were successive. This contradiction is, however, reconciled by the theory of *rationes seminales* [1] by which it appears that God created the universe by a single act or Word but that in that act he imposed on matter the seminal reasons of all things that were to come.

All creation proceeds from the Divine Word at once. On the other hand, not all creatures are made at once. Rather, God places in matter potential forms, seminal reasons, not seeds and yet like seeds, which determine the actual form of things, excluding all other possible forms.[1] The seminal reasons are causes hidden "in the secret bosom of nature" which in some normal, yet mysterious manner, effect "the unfolding of the proper measures and numbers and weights which they have received in secret from Him 'who has ordered all things in measure and number and weight.' "[2] Everything comes into existence at its appointed time. God created matter and the *rationes seminales* in one absolutely simple, single act. The *rationes seminales* bring forth without intermediate activity the first individuals of each species, after which the species is propagated by means of seed, in accordance with the original determination of the seminal reasons.

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[1] For the origin of the theory of rationes seminales see, The Meaning of the Rationes Seminales in St. Augustine, by Michael J. McKeough. Washington, 1926. pp. 17-24.

In other words, we may now understand the first chapter of Genesis to mean that successively various potential things become actual. God first creates the reasons of things to be created rather than the things themselves. For example, "in that first creation of the world when God made all things at once, man was created so that he might continue to exist, the reason of man being created, not the actuality of man created." [1] Plants and animals spring directly from the earth through their seminal reasons. Once things are actually created, they propagate themselves. The species, however, are of a fixed number. They are as numerous as the seminal reasons, which in turn are determined by the decree of creation according to the exemplary ideas in God.[2] Each seminal reason has its perfect exemplar in the Word of God, through whom all was created.

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[1] "Ista quippe originaliter ac primordialiter in quadam textura elementorum cuncta jam creata sunt; sed acceptis opportunitatibus prodeunt. Nam sicut matres gravidae sunt fetibus, sic ipse mundus gravidus est causis nascentium: quae in illo non creantur, nisi ab illa summa essentia, ubi nec oritur, nec moritur aliquid, nec incipit esse, nec desinit." De trin. III, IX, 16. Cf. Ibid III, VIII, 13-15; De gen. ad litt. I, XII, 27; I, XV, 29; VI, VI, 9-11; V, XXIII, 44-46; VI, XIV, 20; Conf. XII, VIII, 8; De gen. ad litt., lib. imperf. III, 10; De gen. contra Man. I, III, 5.

[2] Ibid. Cf. De gen. ad litt. VI, XVII, 27; IX, XVII, 24-25.

The Word is the Son of God, co-eternal with God the Father and begotten of the same substance. Wisdom is the special attribute of the Son, but it is also possible to apply it to God the Father, since the wisdom of the Son came from the Father.[3] The Word or Wisdom is the voice of God. God spoke and through his word the world was made.[4] The Word is in a sense the idea of the world, the plan and purpose of the world.[5] It is like the Platonic ideas, save that it is single. It may also be said that the visible world is but a copy of the world contained in the Word. Nothing was made except through the Word, nothing exists now except through the Word.[6]

While creation took place through one member

[1] De gen. ad litt. VI, IX, 16.
[2] Ibid IV, III-V, 7-12.
[3] De Trin. VI, I, 1.
[4] In Joan. evang., Tr. XVII, 15.
[5] Ibid I, 16-17.
[6] Ibid I, 13.

of the trinity, the Word, the whole trinity is revealed in the process of creation. God the Father, who said, "Let there be," is the origin of the world, God the Son is the enlightenment of the world and God the Holy Spirit is the goodness of the world. The world exists by subsisting in God the Father, it is illumined by contemplating his wisdom God the Son and it has its joy in abiding in God's goodness, the Holy Spirit.[1]

The three members of the trinity are all of the same substance, the Son having been "begotten" of the Father and the Spirit having "proceeded" from both the Father and the Son. The world is not of the same substance as deity, for although made by God it was not made from God.[2] Since, however, until the creation of the world only God existed it follows that the world must have been created from nothing.

The nature of every created thing is good, and it is so because God made it. The fact that this good nature is subject to corruption is not because of any defect in God's workmanship but simply because it was made from nothing, and not from the substance of God.[3] This doctrine led Julian of Eclanum to suggest that for Augustine *nihil* is a kind of second principle which is responsible for all corruption and sin, a principle that plays the same part that the ruler of the kingdom of darkness plays in the Manichaean system.[1] Julian's charge takes on perhaps added force when we remember that according to Augustine's theory of language all words are signs.[2] *Nihil* must, therefore, be a sign of something real. It must at least signify a certain state of mind "when it sees not its object, and as yet finds it not to be, or thinks it has found it not to be a reality." [3]

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[1] De civ. dei XI, XXIV.

[2] "Omnes naturae ex deo, non de deo." De nat. boni contra Man. I. Cf. Ibid XXVII.

[3] Contra epist. Man. quam voc. fund. XXXVIII, 44. Cf. Conf. XII, VII, 7.

Nothing is clearer, however, than that Augustine did not understand "nothing" to be "something." "No attention should be paid," he says, "to the ravings of men who think that *nihil* should be understood to mean something. . . . They have lost their senses by zeal in contradicting." [4] The meaning of *nihil* is indicated in his definition of corruption or sin as the mere absence of being. "In proportion," he declares, "as anything is corrupted, in that proportion it approaches decease. But whatever tends to decease tends to non-existence. Since, then, we must believe that God exists immutably and incorruptibly, while what is called nothing is clearly altogether non-existent; and since, after setting before yourself existence and non-existence, you have observed that the more a visible object increases the more it tends towards existence, while the more it is corrupted the more it tends towards non-existence, why are you at a loss to tell regarding any nature what in it is from God, and what from nothing; seeing that visible form is natural, and corruption against nature? The increase of form leads to existence, and we acknowledge God as supreme existence; the increase of corruption leads to non-existence, and we know that what is non-existent is nothing. Why then, I say, are you at a loss to tell regarding a corruptible nature, when you have both the words nature and corruptible, what is from God and what from nothing? And why do you inquire for a nature contrary to God, since if you confess that He is the supreme existence it follows that non-existence is contrary to Him?" [1]

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[1] Julian:

"Hoc enim nihil, de quo facta sunt omnia, affirmas causam fuisse peccati. Tantum igitur facit apud te nihili huius potentia, quantum apud Manichaeum principis tenebrarum. . . . Magnam, inquis, vim habuit res quae non erat, ob hoc solum, quia nunquam fuerat, verum tum posse plurimum coepit, postquam et ipsum nomen amisit; sortitumque est hoc nihilum magnam dominationem, postquam etiam appellatio ejus interiit." Operis imperf. contra Julianum V, XXXII-XXXIII.

This criticism is repeated by A. Harnack. History of Dogma. English translation. Vol. V, p. 124 and Vol. V, ch. IV, p. 219.

[2] De magistro II, 3. Cf. De trin. VIII, VIII, 12; De doctr. christ. I, II, 2.

[3] Ibid.

[4] De nat. boni contra Man. XXV. Cf. In Joan. evang., Tr. I, 12.

The charge of metaphysical dualism may, therefore, be regarded as entirely unwarranted and the only dualism that remains is that between living for God and living for self. Self-love or pride is the force opposing goodness—and not *nihil*. Corruption and sin entered the world not because God made the world evil or because of any power of "nothing," but because Adam by free will substituted a love of self for a love of God and thus turned from a higher to a lower existence. Until the first man sinned there was no corruption.

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[1] Contra epist. Man. quam voc. fund. XL, 46.

Thus the Augustinian system is perceived to be a pure monism, without, however, any identification of God with the world. God is eternal and unchangeable existence while the world, created *ex nihilo* and not from the substance of God, is subject to corruption and change. In distinguishing God from his creation and thereby avoiding the pitfall of pantheism we must be on the alert not to fall into the other error of deism. God did not make the world, says Augustine, as a carpenter makes a chest, standing outside it while working on it. To the contrary, he is present everywhere in the world while fashioning it.[1] Or to use another figure, he is not like a boundless sea in which the world rests like a sponge, finite, but full of the divine being:[2] he is a spirit, and as spirit is present in matter without being corporeal. "It is his occult power which pervades all things, and is present in all without being contaminated, which gives being to all that is, and modifies and limits its existence, so that without him it would not be thus or thus or have any being at all. . . . He neither uses for his work any material which was not made by him, nor any workmen who were not also made by him, and . . . if he were . . . to withdraw from created things his creative power, they would straightway relapse into the nothingness in which they were before they were created." [1] In other words, although created things are not what God is, they can be nothing without him.[2] He is the light of the universe,[3] the fountain of all life.[4]

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[1] In Joan. evang., Tr. II, 10. [2] Conf. VII, V, 7.

The relation of God to the world may be seen more clearly as one studies the relation of the human soul to God. Both the soul and God are spiritual. The soul is, however, fashioned in the image and likeness of God. Again, whatever life the soul has is from God [5] and "while it abides in its assigned place, it is sustained in mind and conscience by the presence of God himself." [6] Nevertheless, the soul is not God and is, in fact, nothing without him. "The maker is one thing, the thing made is another." [7] God is "inviolable, incorruptible, impenetrable and incontaminable." The soul is "sinful and conversant with misery, and seeks the truth and is in want of a liberator." [1] The changing condition of the soul as well as its creation *ex nihilo* are both cogent proofs that it is not God.[2]

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[1] De civ. dei XII, XXV.

[2] Ibid VII, XXX. Cf. Conf. X, XL, 65; In Joan. evang., Tr. XIII, 5.

[3] In epist. Joan. ad Parth., Tr. I, 4.

[4] De vera relig. XI, 21.

[5] In Joan. evang., Tr. XLVII, 8.

[6] De musica VI, XIII, 40.

[7] Acta seu disput. contra Fortunatum Man. 12.

If the human soul is not a part of God, it goes without saying that matter is not divine.[3] God is, of course, the creator of matter, although he is not material. Augustine gives to matter no properties, defining it as "a certain material absolutely formless and without quality, whence those qualities we perceive are formed." [4] He does insist, however, that matter is not evil, for everything that God made is good.[5]

Strictly speaking, God is the sole reality, for he is that which alone has true existence. On the other hand, created things may also be called real, for while they are not what God is, they are created and sustained by him and are therefore not non-existent.[6] In this world of what we might call relative existence God gave to some "a more ample, to others a more limited existence, and thus arranged the nature of beings in ranks." [1] Numbers were given to each created thing from the lowest to the highest, some numbers transcending our human reason and remaining immutable in truth itself.[2] The numbers of things have a close relationship to wisdom. It is not clear "whether number is in wisdom or from wisdom or whether wisdom itself is from number or in number, or whether both can be shown to be the names of one thing." [3] But whatever is the case, numbers are the forms of things. If you take that from them they will be nothing. We may say, therefore, that all things are from number, "seeing that being pertains to them in so far as they are numbered." Look, then, says Augustine, "upon the sky and the earth and the sea and whatsoever flashes in them or above them or crawls beneath them or flies or swims; they have forms, because they have numbers . . . and human artificers too have numbers of all corporeal forms in art, to which they fit their works, and they move their hands and instruments in fashioning until that which is formed outside is borne back to that light of numbers which is within, and until it can receive its consummation, so far as that is possible, and in order that by way of the interpreting sense it may please that internal judge who gazes upon the heavenly numbers. Ask in the next place, what moves the arms of the artificer himself; it will be a number, for they are moved likewise numerously. And if you withdraw work from the hands, and the intention of fashioning from the soul, and if the motion of the limbs be turned to delight, that will be called a dance. Ask, then, what it is that pleases in a dance; number will answer you: Behold it is I. Now look upon the beauty of the formed body; numbers are held fast in place. Look upon the beauty of mobility in the body; numbers are poured forth in time. Go into the art whence these proceed; seek in it time and space; it never will be; nowhere will it be; nevertheless number lives in it: nor is its region of spaces nor its age of days; and yet when they who wish to make themselves artists apply themselves to learning the art, they move their body through places and times, and even their mind through times: certainly with the passage of time they become more skilled. Transcend then the mind of the artist too that you may see the eternal number; then wisdom will flash forth to you from the very interior seat and from the secret place itself of truth." [1]

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[1] Acta seu disput. contra Fortunatum Man. 11.

[2] De moribus Man. XI, 21-22; De gen. ad litt. X, III-VI, 4-10. Note: In his earliest works, Augustine seems to favor the Platonic view that the individual soul is a part of one world soul. (Cf. De quant. animae XXXII, 69; De immort. animae VIII, 14; XV, 24.) He never was guilty, however, of identifying the world soul with God. Cf. pp. 41-42.

[3] De civ. dei IV, XII-XIII.

[4] De nat. boni contra Man. XVIII.

[5] Ibid. Cf. De moribus Man. II, 3.

[6] Conf. VII, XI, 17.

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[1] De civ. dei XII, II. Cf. Contra epist. Man. quam voc. fund. XXV, 27.

[2] De lib. arb. II, XI, 31.

[3] Ibid.

In addition to distinguishing things according to their number, they may be classified according to the three stages of existence among created things, namely, that which is, that which has life, and that which understands. A stone may be used to represent the lowest class, a sheep, the second class, and a man, the highest class.[1] Or we may sharpen this classification by distinguishing between the nutritive life of vegetable and trees and the sentient life of animals and again between the life of mortal men and that of the immortal angels.[2] We see that a stone has existence but no life, a vegetable, existence and life but no sensation, an animal, existence, life, and sensation but no intelligence. A man has existence, life, sensation and intelligence but is lower than the angels because of his mortality. But although lower than the angels man is made in the image of God and excels all other creatures of the earth, the air and the sea.[3] The first man was indeed "created of such sort, that if he remained in subjection to his Creator as his rightful Lord, and piously kept his commandments, he should pass into the company of the angels, and obtain, without the intervention of death, a blessed and endless immortality." [4] It was only because of a proud and disobedient use of his free will that he became subject to death and compelled to live as do the beasts, the slave of appetite.

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[1] De lib. arb. II, XVI, 41.

In this order of existence all things are measured by their similarity to God. The vegetable is higher than the stone; and man than the animal because of their greater resemblance to and participation in him who is the goal and the measure of existence. If, therefore, man would lift the level of his existence, let him pray to be delivered from the fractional life of the love of self to the rich and abundant life of the love of God. Only God can make possible this higher life, for God alone truly lives; he alone is the source and sustainer of all existence.[1]

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[1] De lib. arb. II, III, 7.

[2] De civ. dei V, II. Cf. De doctr. christ. I, 8.

[3] Ibid XII, XXIII.

[4] Ibid XII, XXI.

[1] De civ. dei XII, VIII.

# CHAPTER VI

## GOD: THE SOURCE OF KNOWLEDGE

As the first member of the Trinity may be distinguished as the source of being, so the second may be characterized as the source of knowledge. The first person of the Trinity is ineffable and immutable being, the second is the "highest truth and highest wisdom and form of things, by whom all things were made." [1] He is the only begotten Son, of the same substance as the Father and co-equal and co-eternal with him.

Although there is a real distinction between the Son and the Father the essence of both is being as well as wisdom, for both are one. "The knowledge of God is itself also His wisdom," says Augustine, "and His wisdom is itself His essence or substance. Because of the marvelous simplicity of that nature, it is not one thing to be wise and another to be, but to be wise is to be." [2] The Son is the perfect image of the Father, the Father begetting the Word equal to himself in every respect; "for He would not have uttered Himself wholly and perfectly, if there were in His Word anything more or less than in Himself." [1]

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[1] Epist. XIV, 4. Cf. In Joan. evang., Tr. I, 16.

[2] De trin. XV, XIII, 22. Cf. In Joan. evang., Tr. XVIII, 10; XCIX, 4.

Like the Father, the Son exists outside the time process, and possesses a perfect knowledge of future things.[2] There is no transition of thought in the Divine Wisdom from past to present or present to future or from what is to what is not yet. He sees all things with absolute unchangeableness, his knowledge being never increased or diminished. Things came into existence as and when it was fitting, but they were known perfectly before they were created. Without movement he moves all things and "knows all times with a knowledge that time cannot measure." [3]

The Son of God himself fixed the time of his incarnation and of his death, knowing it from the beginning as he knows all things.[4] He knew that Adam would sin and foresaw the whole history of sin before the beginning of the world.[5] The angels are his messengers, but they can tell him nothing he does not already know,[6] for he knows everything perfectly and at once.

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[1] De trin. XV, XIV, 23. Cf. VI, X, 11; De gen. ad litt., lib. imperf. XVI, 58; De vera relig. XXXI, 58; De div. quaest. LXXXIII, Qu. L.

[2] De civ. dei V, 9.

[3] Ibid XI, XXI. Cf. De trin. XV, XIII, 22.

[4] In Joan. evang., Tr. CIV, 2.

[5] De civ. dei XII, XXII.

[6] De trin. XV, XIII, 22.

It is in the Son of God that the eternal forms of all visible things may be found. These forms, which Plato called ideas and which are also known as *species* or *rationes* are the rational principles of things. Not having themselves received a form, the forms are fixed and unchangeable, existing eternally in the mind of God. But although the eternal forms never come into being or perish, everything that can and does come into being and perish is formed according to them. It is, moreover, only by participation in these true and eternal forms that anything is what it is. All things are, of course, created by God. On the other hand, they could not have been made without a plan, for it is sacrilege to say or think that God made things without knowing how. It must be, then, that everything has been made according to a form or principle,[1] and that nothing could have been made if there were not first an idea of it in God's mind.[2] It is obvious, moreover, that man was not made according to the same form as a horse. We must conclude, therefore, that each thing has its own form, which exists in the divine intelligence.[1]

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[1] "Sunt namque ideae principales formae quaedam, vel rationes rerum stabiles atque incommutabiles, quae ipsae formatae non sunt, ac per hoc aeternae ac semper eodem modo sese habentes, quae in divina intelligentia continentur. Et cum ipsae neque oriantur, neque intereant; secundum eas tamen formari dicitur omne quod oriri et interire potest, et omne quod oritur et interit . . . quis audeat dicere Deum irrationibiliter omnia condidisse? Quod si recte dici vel credi non potest, restat ut omnia ratione sint condita." De div. quaest. LXXXIII, Qu. XLVI, 2.

[2] "Quoniam Deus non aliquid nesciens fecit, quod nec de quolibet homine artifice recte dici potest: porro, si sciens fecit omnia, ea utique fecit quae moverat. Ex quo occurrit animo quiddam mirum, sed tamen verum, quod iste mundus nobis notus esse non potest,

This means that in the creation of man there must have been in the mind of God not only the idea of mankind in general, but also the idea of each individual with all his peculiar qualities distinguishing him from every other individual. The relation between the idea of the race and that of the individual may be seen by comparing the idea of an angle with that of a square. "As often," says Augustine, "as I please to describe an angle, the *ratio* of the angle and that alone, is present to my mind; but I can never describe a square unless I fix my attention upon the *ratio* of four angles at the same time. In like manner, every man, considered as an individual man, has been made according to one *ratio* proper to himself; but in the making of a nation, although the *ratio* according to which it is made is

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nisi esset; Deo autem nisi notus esset, esse non potest." De civ. dei XI, X.

[1] "Nec eadem ratione homo, qua equis: hoc enim absurdum est existimare. Singula igitur propriis sunt creata rationibus. Has autem rationes ubi arbitrandum est esse, nisi in ipsa mente Creatoris? . . . atque has rerum rationes principales appellat ideas Plato: non solum sunt ideae, sed ipsae verae sunt, quia aeternae sunt, et ejusmodi atque incommutabiles manent; quarum participatione fit ut sit quidquid est, quoquomodo est. . . . Quas rationes, ut dictum est, sive ideas, sive formas, sive species, sive rationes licet vocare." De div. quaest. LXXXIII, Qu. XLVI, 2. Cf. De lib. arb. II, XI, 31-32; II, XVI-XVII, 41-46; De gen. ad litt. II, VI, 12; V, XII-XV, 28-33; In Joan. evang., Tr. I, 16-17; De civ. dei VII, XXVIII; De trin. IV, I, 3.

also one, it is the *ratio* not of one, but of many men collectively. If, therefore, Nebridius is a part of this universe, as he is, and the whole universe is made up of parts, the God who made the universe could not but have in His plan the *ratio* of all the parts. Wherefore, since there is in this *ratio* a very great number of men, it does not belong to man himself as such; although on the other hand, all the individuals are wonderfully reduced to one." [1]

All these ideas, including everything that now exists and has ever existed and ever shall exist, exist eternally unchanged in the Divine Mind, and all are one being and one life.[2] The knowledge of Christ is not one thing and Christ himself another. He is both the light and the source of light, wisdom itself and the source of wisdom, knowledge itself and the source of knowledge.[3] There are not a number of different wisdoms, but rather one only "in which are untold and infinite treasures of things intellectual, wherein are all invisible and unchangeable reasons of things visible and changeable, which were created by it."[4] These countless "reasons of things" or forms are, then, the one wisdom, for what the wisdom of God contains it also is.[5]

We have already observed that the Son is the perfect image of the Father. In like manner, the created universe is an image of the world of ideas or the Son. To be sure, the image in this case is not perfect, since it was made *ex nihilo* and not from the substance of God. It is a lower order of being and is not in any sense to be identified with God. On the other hand, it was made according to the model of the divine ideas and bears, therefore, a genuine resemblance to them.

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[1] Epist. XIV, 4.

[2] De trin. IV, I, 3. Cf. XII, XIV, 23; De gen. ad litt. V, XV, 33.

[3] In Joan. evang., Tr. XXI, 5.

[4] De civ. dei XI, X, 3. Cf. De lib. arb. II, IX, 26.

[5] Ibid.

It is the doctrine of participation or resemblance that holds Augustine's universe together. Strictly speaking, God alone exists, since to be means to be immutable. The created world exists only by its resemblance to and participation in the divine being: the higher the order of existence, the greater the resemblance to God. All beautiful things resemble the one divine beauty of which they are an imitation; all order is a resemblance to the divine order; all unity to the divine unity.

In the same way, all wisdom is a resemblance to and participation in the divine wisdom. We have wisdom in so far as we know God, and in so far as we know him we are like him.[1] No part of man's intellect has any light in itself. It is only by participation in the divine light that our minds are illumined;[2] Christ is the light "inextinguishable and coeternal with the Father, always bright, always shining, always burning."[1] If we are cold in sin we turn to him that we may be warm, if we are sitting in the darkness of ignorance we turn to him as the light by which to behold the truth.

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[1] De trin. IX, XI, 16.

[2] De civ. dei XI, X.

Christ, then, "is our knowledge and the same Christ is also our wisdom. He himself implants in us faith concerning temporal things, He himself shows forth the truth concerning eternal things."[2] He is the truth within us, presiding over the mind;[3] the light of the human reason open to each man in so far as he is able to grasp him "by reason of a good or bad habit of life."[4]

If all knowledge is knowledge of God, every certitude testifies to God's existence. The inescapable conviction of my own existence (since even if I am mistaken, still I am)[5] has significance, then, not merely as a beginning of my knowledge of myself but also as a beginning of my knowledge of God.

In knowing that I am, I really possess three certitudes, for I also know that I live and that I understand. Of these three the last is, of course, the most significant, for while a stone has existence and an animal has life, man alone has reason. If, moreover, man understands it follows necessarily that he also is, and lives.[1]

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[1] In Joan. evang., Tr. XXII, 10. Cf. Conf. VII, V, 8.

[2] De trin. XIII, XIX, 24. Cf. De lib. arb. II, IX, 26; II, XV, 39; De doctr. christ. II, XXXVIII, 57; In Joan. evang., Tr. I, 16.

[3] De musica VI, I, 1; Enarr. in Ps. XLI, 2; De div. quaest. LXXXIII, Qu. LI, 4; LXXIX, 1; Conf. X, XXVI, 37.

[4] De magistro XI, 38.

[5] De duabus animabus contra Man. X, 13; De lib. arb. II, III, 7; De vera relig. XXXIX, 73; Enchiridion XX; De trin. X, X, 14; XV, XII, 21; De civ. dei XI, XXVI.

From the certitude that I understand is involved the knowledge that I have both sensation and rational thought. Both are used in coming to a knowledge of God, for we may find God either by looking behind the sense experience for the cause of the experience and see in the immediate cause the action of the highest and ultimate cause,[2] or we may look within ourselves to see the Truth that dwells in the interior man.[3]

Sensation includes the five senses and also an interior sense to which all things are referred from the five. This interior sense is not peculiar to man. It is in fact possessed by animals and is what permits them to avoid or desire what they perceive by one or more of the ordinary senses. It is a kind of moderator or judge of the senses, but only for purposes of action, not for knowledge.[4]

There is no knowledge by the senses alone, for whatever we know is by reason.[5] If it were possible for the senses to provide knowledge it would mean the triumph of materialism, since the body would then be exercising a causal influence on the soul. This is, however, impossible, for the soul is higher than

[1] De lib. arb. II, III, 7.

[2] De gen. ad litt. IV, 32.

[3] De vera relig. XXXIX, 72. Cf. De magistro I, 2.

[4] De lib. arb. II, V, 12.

[5] Ibid II, III, 9; De quant. animae XXIX, 57.

the body in the order of existence and it is absurd to think that the lower can be the cause of the higher.[1]

On the other hand, it is very clear that there would be no knowledge of material things by the mind if it were not for an impact of some kind by material objects or *species* of material objects on one of the five senses.[2] If the mind could form images independently of the bodily senses or receive reliable impressions without being involved in the illusions produced by the senses, it would follow that the impressions of men who are asleep are of greater accuracy and value than those they experience when awake, and that, therefore, the sun seen in a dream would be more real than the sun seen in broad daylight by men in full possession of their faculties. This, of course, is absurd.[3]

If we are able to conceive in thought things we have never experienced through our bodily senses it is because of the power of the mind to combine images and subtract from or add to them. For example, an image of a crow which is set before the eye of the mind, may by taking away certain features and adding others become an image such as we have never seen with our bodily eyes. Again, anyone can form an idea of the sea without having been to the seashore if he has seen even so much as a teacupful of water. On the other hand, no one can have any idea of the flavor of strawberries or cherries until he has tasted them. The final refutation of "innatism," according to Augustine, is the fact that people who have been blind from birth have no conception at all of light or colors.[1]

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[1] De musica VI, I, 1; VI, IV, 7; De gen. ad litt. XII, XVI, 32-33.

[2] Epist. VII, II, 3.

[3] Ibid.

We may conclude, then, that although "the mind is present in and intermingled with all those images which . . . are figured or can be pictured by us, these are not evolved by the mind from within itself before it has received them through the senses from without." [2] This conclusion, however, but increases the mystery of sensation. How it is possible for bodies, which are inferior, to arouse sensations in their superior, the soul? Augustine answers this question by a careful analysis of the act of perception and the relation of soul and body.

Let us ask ourselves what happens when there is recited in our presence a line from one of the hymns of Bishop Ambrose, say, *"Deus creator omnium."* This verse, we immediately note, has a rhythm. The harmony of sound is due to a numerical relation between the long and short syllables, and from this numerical relation we may conclude that the rhythm is made of numbers.[3]

We can distinguish, however, more than one mode of numbers, for the movement of the air which produces the sound and the sound in the ear of him who hears it are two different things. There is, moreover, another distinction we can make, for the rhythm depends not only on the letters in the line but also on the voice of him who utters it. There must, then, be a third mode of numbers in the speaker's voice.

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[1] Epist. VII, III, 6. Cf. De trin. XI, VIII, 14.

[2] Ibid. Cf. Epist. XIII, 4; De trin. XI, II, 3.

[3] De musica VI, II, 2.

As it happens, this particular verse is one we have heard before and so is present in our memory. There is, therefore, a fourth mode of numbers constituting the rhythm in our memory. This, however, is not all. There is still a fifth mode of numbers, for as the words are heard we make a judgment as to the manner in which they are pronounced, as for example, whether too slowly or too fast, or whether well enunciated or not. The fifth mode of numbers is, therefore, that of judgment.

In the reciting, then, of these three words we can distinguish five modes of numbers, numbers sounding (*sonantes*), numbers heard (*recordabiles*), numbers uttered (*progressores*), numbers remembering (*occursores*) and numbers judging (*judicales*).[1]

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[1] "Siquidem aliud est sonare, quod corpori tribuitur, aliud audire, quod in corpore anima de sonis patitur, aliud operari numeros vel productius vel correptius, aliud ista meminisse, aliud de his omnibus vel annuendo vel abhorrendo quasi quodam naturali jure ferre sententiam." De musica VI, IV, 5. "Vocentur ergo primi judicales, secundi progressores, tertii occursores, quarti recordabiles, quinti sonantes." Ibid VI, VI, 16.

Of all these modes or classes of numbers the last is of course the highest since it is able to judge the others while they are not able to judge it. It also implies the existence of the others, although they do not imply it. Second in importance are the numbers uttered by the voice of the speaker; third come the numbers remembering, fourth the numbers recorded by the ear, and fifth and last in importance, the corporeal numbers sounding in the air.

Having made these distinctions, and remembering that if the soul is superior to the body it cannot be influenced by it, our problem is to explain the origin of the immaterial numbers 'heard' and 'remembered' without admitting that corporeal 'sounding' numbers caused them. Augustine attacks the problem by reminding us that the soul is the life of the body and that life is inseparable from feeling. Sensation, he says, is a normal function of the soul.

The problem that appeared so hard to resolve so long as we conceived of the soul as passive is now easily disposed of, for with the conception of soul as active we see that sensation is the work of the mind as well as of the bodily senses.[1] This is clearly seen in sensations like those of pleasure and pain. When, for example, an external excitation interferes with the normal functioning of the body, it is immediately observed by the ever active and watchful soul, and the attention of the soul, with its effort to remove the obstacle, constitutes the sensation pain.[1]

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[1] **Retract. I, I, 2.**

If, then, sensation may be defined as the soul's attention to modifications of the body,[2] we are prepared to say that the sounding numbers *"Deus creator omnium"* moving through the air and striking our eardrums do not of themselves produce the sensation of numbers heard. Rather do we say that the very moment when the percussion of air strikes the ear drum, the soul which animates the ear and which is ever attentive to every part of the body, creates out of itself the sensation heard. In other words, the corporeal excitation is more in the nature of an appeal from the body to the soul than an action exercised by the body on the soul.[3] The sensation is a spiritual image formed by the soul out of its own substance.[4]

In proving that sense perceptions are the creation of the soul Augustine takes the second step toward God. The certitude that I am is a refutation of skepticism, since any certitude is a witness to the existence of Truth. The second certitude, that I feel, is a refutation of materialism, since all sensations are the product of the soul and are therefore spiritual. The third certitude, that I understand, is as we shall now see a refutation of atheism, since the light of the mind is God.

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[1] "Corporalia ergo quaecumque huic corpori ingeruntur aut objiciuntur extrinsecus, non in anima, sed in ipso corpore aliquid faciunt, quod operi ejus aut adversetur, aut congruant. Ideoque cum renititur adversanti, et materiam sibi subjectam in operis sui vias difficulter impingit, fit attentior ex difficultate in actionem; quae difficultas propter attentionem, cum eam non latet, sentire dicitur, et hoc vocatur dolor aut labor." De musica VI, V, 9. Cf. Epist. VII, III, 7; CXVIII, IV, 24; De gen. ad litt. VII, XIV, 20.

[2] Cf. Étienne Gilson, Introduction a l'Étude de Saint Augustin. Paris, 1929. p. 80.

[3] De musica VI, V, 10.

[4] "Dat enim eis formandis quiddam substantiae suae." De trin. X, V, 7.

An analysis of the work of reason begins with these same sense perceptions we have just been discussing. We may now distinguish, however, three classes of perception, the corporeal, by which we see physical objects in space and time, the spiritual or imaginative by which we see images of physical things not present (whether of memory or imagination), and the intellectual or purely mental, by which we see things that are in no way physical and that are incapable of being represented by images, or in other words the objects of the pure intellect or *ratio superior.*[1] This may be illustrated by the commandment, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as Thyself," in which the letters seen by the eyes are by corporeal vision, the image of a neighbor (not visibly present) by spiritual or imaginative vision and the abstract idea, love, by mental or intellectual vision.[2]

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[1] De gen. ad litt. XII, VI-IX, 15-20. Cf. De civ. dei X, IX.

[2] "Ecce in hoc uno praecepto cum legitur, *Dileges proximum tuum tanquam teipsum* (Matthew XXII, 39), tria genera visionum occurrunt: unum per oculos, quibus ipsae litterae videntur; alterum

Corresponding to these three ways of perceiving there are three classes of *phantasiae* or images in the memory, classified according to their origin from the senses, or the imagination, or the faculty of pure reason. The image of an absent friend is an example of the first; images of Aeneas or Medea with her team of winged dragons, or the North pole supporting the heavens are examples of the second, and images of geometrical figures, musical harmonies, or numbers illustrate the third class of images.[1]

In addition to these distinctions in percepts and memory images Augustine distinguishes four things in the process of knowledge, the noun, the objective reality, the knowledge of the noun, and the knowledge of the objective reality. The noun he ranks higher than certain objective realities, the noun "filth" for example, being better than the visible object which it represents. The knowledge of the object is, however, ranked higher than the knowledge of the noun.[2]

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per spiritum hominis quo proximus et absens cogitatur; tertium per contuitum mentis, quo ipsa dilectio intellecta conspicitur." Ibid XII, VI, 15. Cf. "corporaliter litterae videntur, spiritualiter proximus cogitatur, intellectualiter dilectio conspicitur." Ibid XII, XI, 22.

[1] Epist. VII, II, 4. Note: *Phantasia* are sometimes distinguished from *phantasma*. Cf. "Aliter enim cogito patrem meum quem saepe vidi, aliter avum quem nunquam vidi. Horum primum phantasia est, alterum phantasma." De musica VI, XI, 32. Cf. De trin. XI, V, 8 and De vera relig. X, 18.

[2] De magistro IX, 28. Note: An additional distinction according to "species" is made by Augustine in the De trinitate. There is first the corporeal species (outward appearance of object), second

Words are signs of realities although not the only signs.[1] We use words for two purposes, namely, teaching or recollection.[2] While words are "choice and precious vessels" [3] and by them one can be admonished to learn, nothing is really learned by their use alone, since "when a sign is given to me, if it finds me not knowing the reality of which it is the sign, that sign can teach me nothing," and on the other hand, "if it finds me knowing the reality, what then do I learn by the sign?" [4] We learn signs by means of known realities, but the bare word or sign teaches us nothing concerning the reality of which it is the symbol.

The symbol has two elements, sound and meaning. The sound strikes our ear but teaches us nothing of that of which it is the sign. The meaning of the symbol is likewise hidden from us unless we already know the reality signified. To be sure, words tell us where to look for realities but they do not reveal the realities themselves.[5] By words we can learn only words, or rather only the sound of words. Where the reality is known, the word recalls it,

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the sensible species (appearance for the sense), third, the mental species (appearance for the mind to be conserved in memory), and fourth, the intuitive species (appearance as recalled to mind from memory, or as Augustine says, "ea quae fit in acie cogitantis"). De trin. XI, IX, 16.

[1] De magistro IV, 7.

[2] Ibid VII, 19.

[3] Conf. I, XVI, 26.

[4] De magistro X, 33.

[5] Ibid X, 34.

where the reality is not known, the word is powerless to teach us its meaning.[1]

We learn, therefore, not through words but "either by one of the corporeal organs of sense or by the power of the mind." [2] Through the "corporeal" and "spiritual" visions (*ratio inferior*) we perceive changeable things, "carnal" or visible realities, and through the "intellectual" vision (*ratio superior*) unchangeable, intelligible realities.[3] In other words, by "corporeal" and "spiritual" vision we have *scientia* while by "intellectual" vision we have *sapientia.*

*Scientia* is knowledge of things subject to change and motion, *sapientia* knowledge of the unchangeable realm of dimensions, figures, numbers, and ideas (*rationes*). *Scientia* is the work of the *ratio inferior* reflecting on sense experience, *sapientia* the work of God in the *ratio superior* (pure reason).[4] *Sapientia* is the gift of God to the understanding, a divine illumination. God is the light of the mind, not an earthly light such as the eyes see but rather, "as the heart seeth, when thou hearest, 'He is Truth.' " [5] It is a light far greater than that of the sun and the moon, a light comparable to that of no creature.[1] So great and important is the light of God that without it the soul of man would be in complete darkness.[2]

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[1] De magistro XI, 36.
[2] Ibid XII, 39.
[3] De gen. ad. litt. XII, XXIV-XXV, 65-68. Cf. De magistro XII, 39; De musica I, IV, 8; De civ. dei X, IX; De trin. XII, XV, 24-25; XIII, I, 1-2; XIV, I, 3; XIV, VIII, 11.
[4] Cf. De trin. XII, II-III, 2-3; XII, XIV, 22; XIII, I, 1; XIV, VIII, 11; De div. quaest. ad Simpl. lib. II, Qu. II, 3.
[5] De trin. VIII, II, 3.

The word which we saw to be only a sign, teaching us nothing but its own sound, is now understood to be an occasion by which God makes known a reality to us. By words one can be admonished to learn, but it is the vision of the mind through the illumination of truth that enables us to understand things truly. We are taught "by means of some mental realities which God . . . opens out within the soul." [3] God reminds us that he dwells within the inner man whenever a word is spoken without.[4] He speaks to man "not by means of some audible creature dinning in his ears . . . but by the truth itself, if any one is prepared to hear with the mind rather than with the body. For he speaks to that part of man which is better than all else that is in him, and that than which God Himself alone is better." [5]

Error, then, while common in matters of corporeal and imaginative vision (*scientia*) is impossible in matters of intellectual vision (*sapientia*). If there is an appearance of an error it is because the "noblest part of the human mind" [6] does not really see, for whatever it really sees by intellectual vision is true.[7]

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[1] In epist. Joan. ad Parth., Tr. I, 4.

[2] Enarr. in Ps. VI, 8.

[3] De magistro XII, 40.

[4] Ibid XIV, 46.

[5] De civ. dei XI, II.

[6] De trin. XIV, VIII, 11

[7] "Tamen et per corporalem visionem, et per imagines corporalium quae demonstrantur in spiritu, et boni instruunt, et mali

Although all intellectual vision is true and all truth is a participation in the divine truth, it should not be understood that in perceiving truth the human mind actually sees the Godhead itself. What it sees is the divine light, the impression of an image, God's mark upon the mind. Knowledge is an illumination by God and an understanding of divine truth; it is not a perception of the simple ineffable essence of God.[1]

On the other hand, the more knowledge we have, the more we know of God. This knowledge must, however, be *sapientia* and not merely *scientia*. He who cleaves to God, the knowledge of whom is wisdom, "though he know not the circles of the Great Bear, yet is it folly to doubt but he is in a better state than one who can measure the heavens and number the stars and poise the elements, yet neglecteth Thee who has made all things in number, weight and measure." [2] No knowledge of worldly things can compare with the knowledge and love of God.[3] To know God is, in fact, the highest good, for it is

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fallunt. Intellectualis autem visio non fallitur. Aut enim non intelligit qui aliud opinatur quam est; aut si intelligit, continuo verum est." De gen. ad litt. XII, XIV, 29.

"In illis intellectualibus visis non fallitur." Ibid XII, XXV, 52. Cf. De magistro XI, 38; De trin. XV, X, 17; XV, XII, 21; Epist. CXVIII, III, 12; De div. quaest. LXXXIII, Qu. XXXII; In Joan. evang., Tr. XXXV, 4.

[1] Cf. Richard McKeon: Selections from Medieval Philosophers. Volume I. New York, 1929. p. 5-6.

[2] Conf. V, IV, 7.

[3] De civ. dei IX, XXII.

only in the knowledge of God that man finds true happiness. He who knows all the human sciences without knowing God is completely miserable; but he is happy who, although ignorant of all else, knows God.

The knowledge of God must then become our single aim in life. Out of the many alluring departments of knowledge and the infinity of fascinating truths we must select those which will help us to our one goal. Physics will be of value only in so far as it teaches us concerning the supreme cause, God; metaphysics only as it throws light on the nature of God; ethics only as it finds the highest good in the enjoyment of God. Hence if Augustine appears in his later works to belittle secular knowledge and to confine all wisdom to the Scriptures it is only because life is brief and because the Bible is the surest road to God.

In seeking a knowledge of God, we are helpless without an act of divine grace for it is only after the gift of grace that we have the power to turn toward God. But even with the gift of grace we shall not know God without faith. It must, moreover, be faith in Christ, for it is Christ who is the divine Wisdom. Christ as God, says Augustine, is our goal, Christ as man shows us the way to that goal.[1]

With faith must come purification, for progress in wisdom and progress in virtue coincide. The soul must be purged that "it may have power to perceive that light (of truth), and to rest in it when it is perceived."[1] The light of wisdom is always present to the inner mind, but sin causes a blindness which prevents the perception of truth. If a sinner would come to a knowledge of God he must first become pure. Once the sins have been removed he will behold the wisdom that has constantly been present.[2]

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[1] Sermo XCII; CXXIII; Enarr. in Ps. LX, 4.

One may cling to sensible forms until he is able to grasp those that are incorporeal, since "on whatever place a man has fallen, thereon he must lean, that he may rise."[3] For the children in faith corporeal forms are a necessity, but they should not be so important as one gets older.[4] One can, of course, perceive the incorporeal beauty in beautiful bodies, incorporeal order and unity in the things of the visible world, since God has not left himself without a witness even in the world of sense. On the other hand, we must be on guard lest we become preoccupied with the objects of sense perception, for although sensations are spiritual in that they are the product of the soul, they are images of the soul's inferiors, bodies. The soul creates these images for the benefit of the body of which it is the governor and guardian. It is right that the soul should protect the body from danger but it is certainly wrong to make the soul the body's slave. This is, however, exactly what happens when the soul constantly deserts its highest functions to minister to bodily needs.[1]

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[1] De doctr. christ. I, 10.

[2] In Joan. evang., Tr. I, 19.

[3] De vera relig. XXIV, 45.

[4] Ibid.

One should turn, therefore, as soon as possible from the interests of the outer and lower man to those of the inner and higher man. This means that behind all mutable things one should look for the immutable forms or numbers which sustain them.[2] Only when one sees that which is eternal and unchanging is one realizing one's noblest self and one's true function. One must look for thoughts rather than words, the immutable rather than the changeable, the light of the divine truth rather than the shadows of the senses.

If God is merciful and gives one grace and faith one may come to a satisfying knowledge of the eternal and divine wisdom. Even the wisest man, however, does not know God as do the angels.[3] They know the trinity directly and understand the divine being better than man understands himself.[4] In contrast with the noon day knowledge of the angels man has at best a twilight knowledge of God. He may, however, by childlike faith in divine authority, deep humility, and earnest searching, grow more and more in the knowledge of him who alone is our

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[1] De util. cred. I, 1. Cf. De musica VI, IV, 7; VI, V, 12-14; De trin. X, V, 7.

[2] De lib. arb. II, XVI, 43.

[3] In Joan. evang., Tr. XCVII, 1. Cf. De civ. dei X, XV.

[4] De civ. dei XI, XXIV.

Master, "to love whom and to know whom is itself the happiness of life; that happiness which all men declare that they seek; but few have rejoiced in finding." [1]

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[1] De magistro XIV, 46.

# CHAPTER VII

## GOD: THE SOURCE OF GOODNESS

THE trinity of persons in the Godhead is completed by the Holy Spirit who proceeds from both the Father and the Son and is the absolute goodness and love uniting them. The Spirit is co-equal and co-eternal with the other members of the trinity and forms with them one simple indivisible substance.[1] Although in action it is impossible to distinguish the Spirit from the Father or the Son,[2] in thought one may associate with the Spirit the moral part of philosophy as the natural is associated with the Father and the rational with the Son.[3] As God the Father may, therefore, be regarded as the source of being, and God the Son the source of knowledge, so God the Spirit may be regarded as the source of goodness.[4]

He is the source of goodness because he alone is the unchangeable and uncreated good. To be sure, all things were created good, for they were made in the image of the divine ideas. Since they were created, however, *ex nihilo,* and not from the divine substance itself, their goodness, like their existence, is derived and changeable.[1] They are good only by participation in the divine goodness, which nevertheless loses nothing by their participation.[2]

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[1] In Joan. evang., Tr. LXXIV, 1; Contra Maximum Arian. episc. XX, 1; De trin. I, VI, 13; VI, V, 7.

[2] Sermo LII, X, 23.

[3] Cf. De civ. dei VIII, 4.

[4] Following the imperfect image of the trinity in the mind of man one may also liken the Spirit to *voluntas,* the Father to *memoria,* and the Son to *intellectus.* Cf. Sermo LII, VII-X, 19-23; and De trin. X, XI-XII, 17-19.

As immutable, incorruptible goodness God is liable to no injury, no weakness, no misery.[3] From one standpoint he is ever at rest, since he is in need of nothing.[4] On the other hand, his goodness is never idle, for if it were, the beginning of the world would have indicated a change in deity by an awakening to activity.[5]

Since God is perfectly good, he loves all his creation. His love is both more pure and more compassionate than ours, yet he knows no sorrow [6] for sorrow or grief is a pining for things lost, and God can lose nothing.[7] Not having a physical body, God's compassion is unaccompanied by human emotions. He acts, then, not from any stimulus of painful feeling but simply from motives of benevolence.[8] This absence of feeling means, however, no hard insensibility to sympathy, but rather "the calm of a rational serenity." [1] In other words, his compassion has no physical concomitants and is not to be understood in any anthropomorphic sense. — want? Brain ?

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[1] De nat. boni contra Man. I.

[2] De moribus Man. IV, 6.

[3] Ibid XI, 20-24; XII, 26; De pecc. meritis et remiss. II, XXII, 36; De civ. dei XII, III; Enarr. in Ps. VII, 15. Acta seu disput. contra Fortunatum Man. 6; Conf. VII, IV, 6.

[4] Conf. XIII, XXXVIII, 53.

[5] De civ. dei XII, XVII.

[6] Conf. III, II, 3.

[7] Ibid II, VI, 13.

[8] De moribus eccl. cath. XXVII, 53. Cf. De civ. dei XV, 25.

Being perfect God does not need the love of men any more than a light stands in need of "the glitter of the things it has itself lit up." [2] Man's love and goodness neither adds to nor subtracts from the divine love and goodness. Neither in our loving him nor in his loving us does God enjoy us, for there can be no enjoyment without need. We are forced to conclude, then, that he loves us to use us, and that he uses us not to his advantage but to our own.[3] ?

As perfect goodness God is, of course, perfectly just and holy. All punishment is deservedly inflicted, no one being punished more than he deserves.[4] If God appears severe and cruel it is because severe measures are sometimes necessary to put an end to evil.[5] On the other hand, his severity is without anger, for he always judges with tranquillity.[6] His fierceness, moreover, is that of love, which is described by Augustine as "a sort of fierceness without gall, after the manner of the dove, not of the raven."[1] God does not repent, is not envious, needy or cruel, takes no pleasure in the blood of men or beasts, and is pleased with no guilt and crime.[2]

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[1] De moribus eccl. cath. XXVII, 54.

[2] De doctr. christ. I, XXXI, 34.

[3] Ibid I, XXXII, 35.

[4] De nat. boni contra Man. IX and XI.

[5] De doctr. christ. III, XI, 17. (Anything ascribed to God in the Old Testament which makes him seem sinful must be interpreted figuratively. Cf. Ibid III, XII, 18.)

[6] Enarr. in Ps. VI, 3; LXXII, 12; Enchiridion XXXIII.

There can be no conflict for Augustine between God's goodness and his will, since any primacy of one faculty over another is made impossible by the perfect simplicity of the divine nature. On the other hand, if there is no primacy of will, God's goodness necessarily involves a limitation of his omnipotence. God cannot lie, cannot be unjust, cannot do evil, for if there were sin in God he would not be worthy to be omnipotent.[3] This, however, is no real limitation of God's power. It merely indicates that his will is always good as well as victorious.[4] God is always omnipotent, so much so, in fact, that even when human or angelic wills choose evil things they are powerless to defeat his final purpose.[5] When, for example, he foresaw that the first man would sin, he "arranged his own designs rather with a view to do good to man even in his sinfulness, that thus the good will of the Omnipotent might not be made void by the evil will of man, but might be fulfilled in spite of it." [1] He can even change the wills of evil men so that they will be directed toward goodness. It is an evidence of special mercy when he does this for he is under no obligation to do so.[2] He is always omnipotent, always good, always just, but he is not always merciful, since he does not will the salvation of all men, although he could if he would.[3]

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[1] In epist. Joan., Tr. II, 11.

[2] De moribus eccl. cath. X, 16; De civ. dei XV, XXV; XVII, V; Contra Faustum Man. XXII, 21.

[3] De symbolo ad cathech. II. To be able to sin is a sign of weakness and not of power. The freedom to sin is by no means true freedom. Cf. Operis imperf. contra Julianum V, XXXVIII; De civ. dei V, X.

[4] Enchiridion CII, 26. Cf. De civ. dei XXI, VII; XX, XXX.

[5] De gratia et lib. arb. 41-43. Cf. De duabus animabus contra Man. VII, 9.

While not willing eternal happiness for all men God has created all things good. The corruptible character of created things is not to be charged to God. In so far as anything is "a nature" God made it, but in so far as it is corruptible God did not make it, "for corruption cannot come from Him who alone is incorruptible." [4] There are nevertheless degrees of goodness among created things.[5] Man has been created better than the beast, the beast better than the plant and the plant better than the stone. It is possible for the goodness of these created things either to diminish or to increase, but even if it diminishes, some goodness must remain so long as being remains,[6] for wherever there is being there is goodness. So long, moreover, as a nature preserves its own proper measure, form and order there is no evil.[1] Though corrupt, a nature ranked high in natural measure and form is better than an incorrupt being possessing an inferior natural measure and form.[2] On the other hand, corruption may take away all measure, form and order so that no nature at all remains.[3] This is not intended, however, to deny the possibility of formless matter, since if there is such a thing as formless matter it must have the capacity of form and therefore both goodness and existence.[4]

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[1] Enchiridion CIV, 28. Cf. De civ. dei XXII, I.

[2] Ibid XCVIII, 25. Cf. De gratia et lib. arb. 29.

[3] Ibid CIII, 27.

[4] Contra epist. Man. quam voc. fund., XXXVIII, 44. Cf. Ibid XXXVI, 41; XXXVII, 42.

[5] Ibid XX, 27.

[6] Enchiridion XII, 4.

It is clear, then, that in creating the world, God made every separate part good. These good things are, however, even better when considered as a whole for according to Augustine "all beauty, which consists of parts is much more commendable as a whole than in part." [5] A beautiful hand, for example, is admired by itself while a part of a beautiful body, but it is evident that the beauty of the whole is greater than the part, since if the hand be separated from the body it suddenly loses its beauty and the other parts of the body, without the hand, are now deformed. "So great," he says, "is the force and power of entireness and unity, that even a multitude of things, in themselves good, please not until they meet and harmonize in one whole or universal." [1]

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[1] De nat. boni contra Man. XXXVII. Cf. Ibid III; Contra epist. Man. quam voc. fund. XXXI, 34.

[2] Ibid V.

[3] Ibid VI.

[4] Ibid XVIII.

[5] De Gen. contra Man. I, XXI, 32.

In emphasizing the goodness of the world we must be careful not to impute to it perfection or incorruptibility. As a matter of fact, corruption is at work in all changeable things and evil is present everywhere. The presence of evil does not, however, contradict our assertion that God created all things good, for evil is not a separate reality but is a mere privation of good, a falling away from essence, a tendency toward non-existence.[2] It has no positive character, being merely the loss of goodness,[3] the loss of measure, form, or order.[4] It is, therefore, contrary to nature but without a nature of its own.[5] Things are called evil because either they are less than they ought to be, or they are not fitting things to do, or they are not in harmony with the moral or physical world, or they are bad in comparison with something better.[6]

Like darkness, which is a mere absence of light,[7] or silence, which is a mere absence of sound,[8] evil

[1] De Gen. contra Man. I, XXI, 32. Cf. De Musica VI, XI, 30.

[2] De moribus Man. II, 3. Cf. Conf. III, VII, 12; Enchiridion XI-XIV, 3-4; De civ. dei XIV, XI.

[3] De civ. dei XI, IX.

[4] De nat. boni contra Man. IV.

[5] De moribus Man. II, 2. Cf. Contra Epist. Man. quam voc. fund. XXXV, 39.

[6] De nat. boni contra Man. XXIII.

[7] Ibid XVI.

[8] Contra epist. Man. quam voc. fund. XXXI, 34.

is not a substance in its own right. Indeed, far from being a substance it is the enemy of all substance.[1] It is like the making crooked of a straight line, which destroys the beauty of straightness but without introducing any new material.[2] It is not the striving for an evil nature but the desertion of a better one,[3] a perversion of the will,[4] a turning of one's back to the light of God.[5]

Evil
Devil
Good

Nothing is entirely evil.[6] Even the Devil, who is the prince of the forces of evil, has a nature that is good, else he could not exist. While he has lost much of his goodness many good things remain, for example, "his material frame, the symmetry of the members on one side with those on the other, the unity of his form, the settled continuity of his parts, the orderly adjustment of the mind as ruling and animating, and the body as subject and animated."[7] If all good things were taken away from the Devil he would cease to be. In other words, every created thing is good in so far as it is a being and is evil only in so far as it is imperfect.[8] An evil man is, therefore, an imperfect good, for since evil in itself is nothing there is no evil present unless there is something good.[1]

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[1] De moribus Man. VIII, 11.

[2] Contra epist. Man. quam voc fund. XXVII, 29.

[3] De nat. boni contra Man. XXXIV; De civ. dei XII, VIII.

[4] Conf. VII, XVI, 22.

[5] De lib. arb. II, XVI, 43.

[6] De civ. dei XII, III; Enchiridion XIV, 4.

[7] Contra epist. Man. quam voc. fund. XXXIII, 36.

[8] Enchiridion XIII, 4. Cf. Conf. VII, XII, 18.

When, moreover, we turn to a study of evil in the physical world we perceive that much which appears to be evil is not evil at all. Fire, for example, may be called evil when it burns our hands or consumes our house but no one disputes the beauty of its shining flames or the blessedness of its heat as a protection against cold and as a means of preparing our food. We are apt to judge things by our convenience or discomfort, forgetting that what hurts or disagrees with us at one time may be of great utility at another, or that what is harmful to us may be of value to some other living creature.[2] In this sense things may appear both good and evil—their goodness or evil depending on their utility or harmfulness. In themselves, Augustine would insist, they are good[3] and the fact that they are sometimes harmful is simply their failure to harmonize well with other good things.[4]

Even if we admit that there is evil we have to confess that it greatly enhances our admiration of the good; for we enjoy and value the good more when we compare it with the evil.[5] It is of value, moreover, as a source of instruction and discipline since it teaches men that they may not love something else and forget God, their true good.[1] Even pain has its use, for it counsels patience and awakens sympathy and may be the means of compelling one to live a better life.[2] In fact we may say that sin itself adds to the perfection of the universe. Just, says Augustine, "as the beauty of a picture is increased by well managed shadows, so to the eye that has skill to discern it, the universe is beautified even by sinners, though, considered by themselves, their deformity is a sad blemish." [3] Or to use a different figure, evil embellishes the world much as antitheses set off an exquisite poem, for as "the oppositions of contraries lend beauty to language, so the beauty of the course of the world is achieved by the opposition of contraries, arranged, as it were, by an eloquence not of words but of things." [4]

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[1] Enchiridion XIII, 4. Cf. De nat. boni contra Man. XX; Contra epist. Man. quam voc. fund. XXXIII, 36.

[2] De civ. dei XII, IV. Cf. De Gen. contra Man. I, XVI, 25.

[3] Enchiridion X.

[4] Conf. VII, XIII, 19. Cf. De ordine I, I, 2; II, XIX, 51; De Gen. ad litt. XI, XXI, 28.

[5] Enchiridion XI, 3.

At first thought, the fact of evil seems to deny either God's goodness or his omnipotence. This, however, is not to be believed, for God is omnipotent and he does well in permitting evil. To be sure, evil in so far as it is evil, is not a good, but nevertheless the fact that evil as well as good exists is good.[5]

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[1] Enarr. in Ps. XCIII, 20. Cf. De civ. dei I, XXIX.

[2] De nat. boni contra Man. XX. Cf. De civ. dei XXI, XIII.

[3] De civ. dei XI, XXIII. Cf. De Gen. ad litt., lib. imperf. V, 25.

[4] Ibid XI, XVIII. Cf. De ordine I, VII, 18. See also Note 1 on next page.

[5] Enchiridion XCVI.

God judges, says Augustine, that it is better to make good from evil than not to permit evil at all.[1] Nothing, moreover, can defeat God's purpose or bring to nought his will, for even corruption or evil can do no more and no less than God permits.[2] Again, while creatures may make a bad use of good natures God can make a good use even of bad wills.[3] He makes good out of evil by pardoning, by healing, by turning to the profit of the pious, and by taking vengeance. These are all good things, yet they could not be done save through evil.[4] When man sins he does, of course, what God does not wish him to do, so that to all appearances he is defeating God's will. Actually, however, he is doing what God knew he would do and for which he predestined him to eternal punishment.[5]

Evil, says Augustine, is of two kinds, "one which a man doth, the other which he suffers. What he doth is sin; what he suffereth, punishment." [6] Sin was made possible by the gift of free will,[7] the two sources of sin being our own wills and the persuasion of others.[1] All sins, moreover, may be divided into three classes, the pleasures of the flesh, pride and curiosity.[2] Of these the greatest is pride, since it is the source of all other sins.[3] "What is pride," asks Augustine, "but the craving for undue exaltation? And this is undue exaltation, when the soul abandons Him to whom it ought to cleave as its end, and becomes a kind of end to itself." [4] To swell with pride is to turn away from God not, of course, "by distance of space but by the affections of the mind." [5] The pleasures of the flesh may all be called the work of pride, for they are simply a tumult of the senses wherein the world forgets God its Creator, and becomes enamored of his creature instead of him, "through the fumes of that invisible wine of its self will." [6] Pride causes men to imitate God instead of obeying him,[7] to count his righteousness from himself instead of from God.[8] Removing itself far from God pride lifts itself up against God, attempting to do what is not permitted.[9] Pride seeks, in fact, "a sort of likeness of God, in a proud and perverted, and, so to say, slavish freedom." [10]

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[1] Enchiridion II; De civ. dei XIV, XXVII. This does not mean that God desired evil to enter the world or that the world is a better world because of evil. The harmony and beauty of the universe would be perfect even without evil. Cf. De lib. arb. III, IX, 26; III, XII, 35.

[2] Contra epist. Man. Quam. voc. fund. XLI, 47. Cf. De civ. dei XVIII, XIX; XXII, XXIV.

[3] De civ. dei XI, XVII; XIV, XI.

[4] De symbolo ad Catech. XV.

[5] Enchiridion C, 26. Cf. De civ. dei XXII, II.

[6] Contra Adimant. Man. discip. XXVI. Cf. De civ. dei XXII, 24.

[7] Operis imperf. contra Julianum VI, V; De lib. arb. II, I, 1.

There is no efficient cause of a proud or evil will, for an evil will is not the effecting of anything, rather is it a defect.[1] A bad will is the cause of a bad action but there is no efficient cause of a bad will. If there were an efficient cause and it were another will it would have to be either good or bad, but no good will makes another will bad, else goodness would be the cause of sin. Again, if the efficient cause were a bad will, we might ask what made it bad. This question might be repeated until we came to ask what made the first evil will bad. The answer, declares Augustine, would have to be "Nothing," inasmuch as no natural efficient cause of the evil will could be found.[2]

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[1] De lib. arb. III, X, 29.

[2] Enarr. in Ps. VIII, V.

[3] In Joan. evang., Tr. XXV, 16.

[4] De civ. dei XIV, XIII.

[5] De musica VI, XIII, 40.

[6] Conf. II, III, 6.

[7] Ibid II, VI, 14.

[8] In Joan. evang., Tr. LXXXI, 2.

[9] Conf. II, VI, 14.

[10] De trin. XI, V, 8.

In the second book of the *De Libero Arbitrio,* Evodius asks Augustine to explain why man was given free judgment of will, since it is evident that this gift was responsible for sin.[3] Evodius recognizes that God is just and good, and that every good thing is from God. He believes also that man, "in so far as he is man, is something good, because he can, when he so wishes, live rightly." [4] He argues, and Augustine agrees, that only that which is done by a free human will can be either sinfully or rightly done, since unless man has free will both punishment and reward are unjust.[5]

Augustine answers that while punishment and reward demand free will, God did not bestow the gift of free will in order that man might sin. He gave it because without it man could not live so as to be worthy of a reward. Once free will was given, the use of the will for sinning was condemned by God, thus indicating that God gave free will in order that man would choose the good.[1] The fact, however, that it is free means that it is free to turn its back on goodness.

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[1] De civ. dei XII, VII.

[2] Ibid XII, VI; XII, IX.

[3] De lib. arb. II, I, 1.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid II, I, 3. Cf. Ibid III, XVIII, 50; Retract. I, IX, 5.

Will, then, may be defined as "a movement of mind, no one compelling, either for not losing or for obtaining something." [2] Sin "is the will of retaining or of obtaining, what justice forbids, and whence it is free to abstain." [3] He who sins must sin by free will, else he would be unjustly punished. He "who is compelled by nature to do anything, does not sin." [4]

In the earlier works of Augustine, particularly those against the Manichaeans, he is chiefly concerned with the refutation of dualism and the defense of God's nature as supremely good and omnipotent spirit. In attacking dualism he insists that moral evil is the result of free judgment of will. He admits that "whatever the cause itself of volition is, if it is impossible to resist it, submission to it is not sinful," [5] but believes that since the will is free and God's grace is available to all, resistance is not impossible. On the other hand, he recognizes that "some actions also deserve disapprobation, that are done from necessity, as when a man wishes to act rightly and cannot." [1] Otherwise we should be at a loss to explain Paul's confession that "the good that I would, I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do." [2] Nevertheless, he says, if these sins which Paul felt it was impossible for him to avoid were caused by his nature rather than as a punishment for other sins, they were not sins.

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[1] De lib. arb. II, I, 3.

[2] De duabus animabus contra Man. X, 14.

[3] Ibid XI, 15.

[4] Acta seu disput. contra Fortunatum Man. 17. Cf. De vera relig. XIV, 27.

[5] De lib. arb. III, XVIII, 50. Cf. De nat. et gratia LXVII, 80.

His position, therefore, in these earlier works is that everyone is endowed by God with an unvitiated will free to choose the good. If, however, man fails to choose that which is right for him to do, evil becomes so ingrafted in his nature that even when he sees what ought to be done and wishes to do it, he is now unable to accomplish it. "For," says Augustine, "this is the most just penalty of sin, that a man should lose what he has been unwilling to make good use of, when he might with ease have done so if he would; which, however, amounts to this, that the man who knowingly does not do what is right loses the ability to do it when he wishes. For, in truth, to every soul that sins there accrue these two penal consequences—ignorance and difficulty." [3]

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[1] De lib. arb. III, XVIII, 51. [2] Romans VII, 19.

[3] De lib. arb. III, XVIII, 51. Cf. Ibid I, V, 18; Acta seu disput. contra Fortunatum Man. 16-17 and 22.

This is the same view of sin that is found in the later works.[1] His doctrine of free and unvitiated will is, however, somewhat modified, due in part to a reaction against the extreme position of the Pelagians and in part to his continued close study of the Scriptures, particularly of the Pauline epistles, in which he found what he regarded as unmistakable evidence of the doctrines of limited grace and predestination. In the later works, therefore, freedom of will in the sense of power to choose the good is carefully limited to Adam, and the fall of Adam becomes the central act of history.[2]

In the beginning, says Augustine, God created the angels, endowing them with wills that were free and strong enough to turn either to or from goodness. One of the angels, named Lucifer or Bearer-of-Light, dissatisfied with his lot, used this gift of free determination of will to rebel against God and set up his own kingdom. In turning away from goodness he became utterly without light [1] and lost the power to choose the good, although God permitted him to retain his other angelic powers. On the other hand, the angels who chose to use their freedom in cleaving to God were soon so perfected in goodness that it became impossible for them to will evil. From this we may be sure both that there will never be another devil and that the present devil and his legions can never regain their place among the good angels.[2]

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[1] Conf. I, XX, 31; II, I, 1; XI, V, 10; III, VIII, 16; VI, VI, 9; VII, III, 5; De trin. XII, VIII-XI, 13-16.

[2] This is perhaps not so much a modification as a clarification of his thought, for even in his earlier works he holds that Adam's deliberate disobedience robbed him of the power to choose the good and made him the slave of that which he had chosen of his own free will. As Augustine reflected on the doctrine of the Church that "In Adam's fall we sinned all" he perceived that it demanded belief in the view that all men are born sinners, and being sinners from birth are powerless to choose the good except by divine aid. He must also have realized that his theory of knowledge, with its dependence on divine illumination, implied that there can be no goodness without God's assistance.

When Adam, the first man, was created, he possessed such power that absolutely nothing could resist his will, if he had willed to keep the precepts of God.[3] He had everything that a rational creature needs, including the power to live forever.[4] He so naturally inclined toward the good that it would have been easy for him to have reached the stage of perfect freedom, in which, like God and the good angels, he would have been no longer able to sin.

He was not only created in God's own image and enriched by every kind of abundance and security, but he had almost nothing required of him in the way of service of God, for God had given him, in order to make obedience easy, "a single very brief and very light precept by which He reminded that creature whose service was to be free that He was Lord." [5] He had, moreover, been cautioned by God that in the day he ate of the forbidden fruit he would surely die.[1]

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[1] In Joan. evang., Tr. III, 7. [2] De civ. dei XI, XII.

[3] Acta seu disput. contra Fortunatum Man. 22. Cf. A. Harnack, History of Dogma. English Translation. Vol. V, Ch. IV, p. 215.

[4] De civ. dei XIV, XXVI. [5] Ibid XIV, XV.

Nevertheless, when tempted by the devil in the guise of a serpent, aided and abetted by Eve, Adam disobeyed the command of God. This sin, so hard to commit, so easy to avoid, was quite as serious as the revolt of Lucifer, for it too involved the desire to be like God, it too expressed pride, envy, disobedience, lust, and self-love. Since all sins were contained in Adam's sin and since God is just, it was necessary that judgment be swift and severe.

The punishment was that this man, "who by keeping the commandments should have been spiritual even in his flesh, became fleshly even in his spirit; and as in his pride he had sought to be his own satisfaction, God in his justice abandoned him to himself, not to live in the absolute independence he affected, but instead of the liberty he desired, to live dissatisfied with himself in a hard and miserable bondage to him to whom by sinning he had yielded himself, doomed in spite of himself to die in body as he had willingly become dead in spirit, condemned even to eternal death (except for deliverance by God's grace) because he had forsaken eternal life." [2] Since he has turned from God of his own free will, he is from this time forth to be without the power to turn to God. Having known what was right and yet having chosen evil, he is now to be unable to choose the good.[1] Free choice remains, but only freedom to choose among evil things.[2] A certain knowledge of the good remains, but what the mind recognizes as good, the will is powerless, to secure.[3] The mind still has some power in commanding the body, but even here its power is no longer perfect, for an insubordination of the flesh may be discerned in the behavior of the sexual organs, which shame now modestly covers.[4]

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[1] De civ. dei XIII, XII. Cf. De pecc. meritis et remiss. XXI-XXII, 35-36; De corrept. et gratia X-XI, 28-29.

[2] Ibid. XIV, XV. Cf. De pecc. meritis et remiss. II-IV, 2-4; VIII, 8; De trin. XIII, XII, 16.

So heinous was Adam's sin that justice demanded the punishment not only of the first pair but also of all their descendants.[5] Everyone, "even the infant whose life is but a day upon the earth," is born a sinner, inheriting Adam's guilt, his vitiated will, his pride and his concupiscence.[6]

Man is not totally depraved, for he still enjoys many priceless gifts of mind and body. Even his will, although now greatly weakened, is free to choose what it desires. Unfortunately, however, man has far less knowledge of the good than he had before, and since "without knowledge the virtues themselves, by which one lives rightly, cannot be possessed," [1] he is completely dependent on God's mercy both in the illumination of his mind with knowledge of the good and in the strengthening of the will with divine grace.[2]

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[1] De pecc. meritis et remiss. XVIII, 31; Contra duas epist. Pelag. II, IX, 21. Cf. De civ. dei XIV, XV.

[2] Contra duas epist. Pelag. I, II-III, 5-7; De spir. et litt. III, 5.

[3] Conf. VIII, IX, 21; Contra advers. legis et prophet. I, XIV, 19-21; De pecc. meritis et remiss. XVI, 21.

[4] De civ. dei XIII, XIII; XIV, XVII-XVIII; XIV, XX; XIV, XXI; De nuptiis et concupisc. I, V-VI, 6-7; I, XX, 24; I, XXX, 34; II, XXII, 37; II, XXX, 52; Contra duas epist. Pelag. I, XV-XVII, 31-35.

[5] De pecc. meritis et remiss. IX-XV, 9-20; De nat. et gratia III-V, 3-5; De nuptiis et concupisc. I, I, 1; II, VIII, 20; II, XXVII, 45; II, XXXIV, 57-58; Contra duas epist. Pelag. IV, IV, 6-8; De corrept. et gratia X, 28; De civ. dei XIII, XIV; XV, I; XXI, XII; XXII, XXIV; De trin. XIII, XII, 16.

[6] Conf. I, VII, 11.

It should not be thought that man's moral sickliness is due to any evil nature. It is rather to be understood as the work of sin or vice in a good nature,[3] "for," says Augustine, "as blindness is a vice of the eye and this very fact indicates that the eye was created to see the light . . . so the nature which once enjoyed God teaches, even by its very vice, that it was created the best of all, since it is now miserable because it does not enjoy God." [4]

There is no need, then, to accuse the flesh of being evil, as do the Manichaeans, or even to think of the body as the cage of the soul and the origin of the diseases of desire, fear, joy and sorrow, as do the

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[1] De trin. XII, XIV, 21. Cf. De pecc. meritis et remiss. II, XVIII, 33.

[2] De nat. et gratia XXVI, 29; De gratia Christi XXVI, 27; De spir. et litt. II-III, 4-5; VI, 10; XI, 18; XXIX, 50; XXX, 52; XXXIV, 60; Contra duas epist. Pelag. II, VIII-IX, 17-21; De gratia et lib. arb. XXIV, 46.

[3] De civ. dei XV, VI; XIV, XIII.

[4] Ibid XXII, I.

Platonists.[1] The lusting of the flesh against the spirit is not the cause but the result of sin. It was not the corruptible flesh that made the soul sinful, but the sinful soul of Adam that made the flesh corruptible. If evil were caused by the flesh how could we explain the wickedness of the devil, who has no flesh? [2] No, concludes Augustine, "in its own kind and degree the flesh is good; but to desert the creative goodness of God and live according to the created good, is not good, whether a man choose to live according to the flesh, or according to the soul, or according to the whole human nature, which is composed of flesh and soul, and which is therefore spoken of either by the name flesh alone, or by the name soul alone." [3]

But while man has still, then, a good nature, it is nevertheless only by divine grace that his state of sin can be annulled and he is vouchsafed a knowledge of goodness and the grace to choose it. Since, moreover, it is only in Adam that all men have sinned, it is only in Christ that all men are justified, for as the one perfect and sinless man it is Christ alone who has broken the power of the devil. It is his grace and only his which regenerates man by the Spirit.[1] It follows therefore that no one can be saved from sin since the coming of Christ in the flesh, who has not received Christian baptism. Even infants are damned if they die without this grace-giving rite, although since they have added no actual sin to the original sin inherited from Adam, their punishment in the other world is the mildest of all.[2]

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[1] De civ. dei XIV, V. Cf. Ibid XI, XXIII. Note: He had formerly agreed with the Platonists.

[2] Ibid XIV, III.

[3] Ibid XIV, V. Cf. Ibid XIII, XVI; XV, XX; XV, XXII; XIX, I; XIX, XIII; XXII, XXIV; Conf. II, V, 10; De doctr. christ. I, IV, 4; I, XXII, 20-21; I, XXIV, 24-25; III, XVIII, 27; De trin. IX, VIII, 13. Augustine is accused by Harnack, Fairbairn, Ottley and others of having never wholly surmounted Manichaeism. (Cf. A. Harnack, History of Dogma Vol. V, pp. 102, 211-212 and 219. (English Translation); Fairbairn, Christian Modern Theology, pp. 115 ff. and Ottley, Confessions of St. Augustine, p. 51.) The truth of the charge may, however, be seriously questioned, for not only can the elements which have been labelled "Manichaean" be satisfactorily accounted for by reference to Ambrose, Paul or Plotinus, but it can also be shown that in every case there is (as in the citations above) a real and important distinction between the Augustinian and Manichaean positions.

The effect of baptism is the remission of all sins and the reconciliation of man to God. This means that all guilt for Adam's sin is removed and in addition "whatever of evil has been done, said or thought by a man while he was servant to a mind subject to its concupiscence" is completely erased and "regarded as if it had never occurred."[3] At the same time, concupiscence itself, or the Adamic nature, is not driven from the body but "remains in the contest in which we chasten our body and bring it into subjection, whether to be relaxed for lawful and necessary uses, or to be restrained by continence." [1] One has, however, the assurance by baptism and faith that God will now strengthen every good will by his gift of grace so that what is impossible for man by his will alone is now possible by the use of his will in cooperation with grace.[2]

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[1] De peccat. meritis et remiss. I, XV, 19; XXVIII, 55-56; De peccato originali XVIII-XIX, 33-34; De nuptiis et concupisc. I, I, 1; II, VIII, 20; Contra duas epist. Pelag. II, VII, 23; IV, IV, 6; De corrept. et gratia II, 3. For the work of the Spirit cf. Sermo LXX, XVII, 28; VIII, XI, 13; CXLIV, I, 1; De praedest. sanct. II, 3-5; VIII, 16; In Joan. evang., Tr. XXIX, 6; De div. quaest. ad Simpl. II, 5; Epist. ad Rom. inchoata expos. 11.

[2] De pecc. meritis et remiss. I, XVI, 21; Enchiridion XCIII; Contra Julianum haeresis Pelag. defens. V, XI, 44.

[3] Ibid I, XXXIX, 70. Cf. De nat. et gratia LIII, 61; De nuptiis et concupisc. I, XXV, 28.

On the other hand, even baptism does not guarantee the continuance of God's grace, for to those among the baptized whom God foreknew would be ungodly, he offers no assistance.[3] Why he withholds his grace from some while giving it freely to others we do not know, for the secret judgments of God are not revealed to us. We do know, however, that he is just and good. We also know that when he withholds his grace he is but repaying evil with evil, which is certainly just, and that when he gives his grace he is repaying evil with goodness, which is certainly good. We have faith, moreover, that he will repay goodness with goodness, since this is both good and just.[4]

From Augustine's doctrine that God's grace precedes even the beginning of faith[1] it is clear that without his aid man cannot take any steps towards goodness. Even the desire for goodness, in fact, even the desire for an imperfect good is a gift of God's grace.[2] Our turning away from God is our own act, but it is impossible for us to turn to God except when he gives us a good will.[3] Thus when Augustine declares that God commands no impossibilities but simply counsels men to do what they can for themselves and to ask his aid in what they cannot do,[4] he is speaking only of the baptized on whom God looks with favor and not of the race as a whole. Again, when he insists that freedom did not perish with Adam's sin, and that even the wicked have enjoyed free will, he has reference only to the freedom to choose among evil things, for grace as well as free will is necessary before men can choose anything good.[5]

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[1] De pecc. meritis et remiss. I, XXXIX, 70. Cf. Ibid II, XXVIII, 45-46.

[2] Ibid II, IV-V, 4-6; VII-VIII, 9-10; De spir. et litt. XIX, 32; XXXIII, 58; De gratia et lib. arb. IV, 7-8; XV, 31; XVII, 33.

[3] De gratia et lib. arb. XXIII, 45.

[4] Ibid.

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[1] De praedest. sanct. II, 3-4; III, 7; VIII, 16; XIX-XX, 39-40. Augustine confesses that he had formerly believed that faith preceded grace, "putans fidem qua in Deum credimus, non esse donum Dei, sed a nobis esse in nobis, et per illam nos impetrari Dei dona quibus temperanter et juste et pie vivamus in hoc saeculo. Neque enim fidem putabam. Dei gratia praeveniri, ut per illam nobis daretur quod posceremus utiliter; nisi quia credere non possamus, si non praecederet praeconium veritatis: ut autem praedicato nobis Evangelio consentiremus, nostrum esse proprium, et nobis ex nobis esse arbitrabar." (Ibid.)

[2] Contra duas epist. Pelag. II, VIII, 17-18.

[3] De pecc. meritis et remiss. XVIII, 28-33; Contra duas epist. Pelag. I, XIX, 37.

[4] De nat. et gratia XLIII, 50.

[5] Contra duas epist. Pelag. I, II, 5; I, III, 7; De gratia et lib. arb. II-V, 2-10; XV-XVII, 31-33. Note: Before Adam's fall the

Augustine refuses to concede that man's vitiated will is any excuse for sinning.[1] Man cannot blame either God or his own nature for his sins—for he can sin only by the consent of his own will. If sin defeats him it is because his will has willed that he be defeated. If he knows that his will is weak, let him avoid temptation, for he will not sin if he is not tempted. To be sure, God knows in advance who will sin, but this foreknowledge does not compel the sinning. God does not will that a man shall sin, he merely knows that he will, his foreknowledge being entirely separate and distinct from his willing.[2]

Even the punishment of sinners is not so much punishment by God as punishment by themselves. Of the two kinds of evil, voluntary sin and the penalty of sin, God has nothing to do with the first but he does order the record, since justice demands that sin be punished.[3] Sin is the cause of death rather than God, yet death is God's just judgment. It is the desert of the crime and not the justice of the judge which is the cause of punishment.[4]

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will was both free to choose and powerful to perform. The fall left it still free to choose and still strong enough to perform evil, but deficient in its knowledge of the good and utterly powerless to do it.

[1] De gratia et lib. arb. II-III, 2-5.

[2] In Joan. evang., Tr. LIII, 3-6; De anima et ejus origine I, VII, 7; De catechiz. rudibus XVIII, 30; Enchiridion CIV; Contra duas epist. Pelag. II, V-VI, 10-12; De serm. dom. in monte II, III, 12. Cf. De civ. dei V, IX-XI.

[3] Acta seu disput. contra Fortunatum Man. 15.

[4] De trin. IV, XII, 15.

It is true that sometimes God does inflict evil on us, as when he sends plagues or famines to reduce our swollen pride to penitence.[1] It is his usual custom, however, not to bring evil on sinners from himself but simply to let them alone and withdraw his aid.[2] Thus sinners punish themselves by choosing more and more evil until they "fill up the sum of their misery." [3]

Not only can God not be blamed for the punishment suffered by sinners but he ought to be thanked for his wonderful goodness even to wicked men. Light, air, earth, water, fruits, health, strength, pleasures, etc., are lavished by God on good and bad alike.[4] Even kingdoms and great honors are often given to the bad, since it is only in the life hereafter that God's gift of felicity is limited to the good.[5]

It will be remembered that Adam's sin was so serious that the whole race has been condemned in punishment for it. There would, then, be no just cause for finding fault with God if he witheld his grace from all men.[6] God is, however, very merciful and he has predestinated from the beginning of the world the many whom he will save.[7]

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[1] In Joan. evang., Tr. I, 15.

[2] Ibid LIII, 6.

[3] Enarr. in Ps. V, 10.

[4] De civ. dei V, XXVI. Cf. Ibid VII, XXXI.

[5] Ibid IV, XXXIII.

[6] De praedest. sanct. VIII, 16.

[7] De dono persever. XIV, 35, XVIII, 47. De praedest. sanct. X, 19; De corrept. et gratia XIII, 39; De civ. dei XX, XV; XXI, XII.

Thus all humanity is divided into two classes, the saints and the damned, the godly and the ungodly, the believers and the unbelievers. From these two classes Augustine forms two cities, one characterized by the love of God, even to the contempt of self and the other by the love of self even to the contempt of God.[1] "The one seeks glory from man; but the greatest glory of the other is God, the witness of conscience. The one lifts up its head in its own glory, the other says to its God, 'Thou art my glory, and the lifter up of my head.' In the one, the princes and the nations it subdues are ruled by the love of ruling; in the other, the princes and the subjects serve one another in love, the latter obeying, while the former take thought for all. The one delights in its own strength, represented in the persons of its rulers; the other says to its God, 'I will love Thee, O Lord, my strength.' And therefore the wise men of the one city, living according to man, have sought for profit to their own bodies or souls, or both, and those who have known God 'glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations and their foolish heart was darkened; professing themselves to be wise,'—that is, glorying in their own wisdom, and being possessed by pride,—'they became fools and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things.' For they were either leaders or followers of the people in adoring images, 'and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever.' But in the other city there is no human wisdom, but only godliness, which offers due worship to the true God, and looks for its reward in the society of the saints, of holy angels as well as holy men, that God may be all in all." [1]

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[1] Humility, therefore, is the beginning of all virtue and pride the beginning of all vice. Cf. De civ. dei XIV, XIII.

In this description of the two cities we have the contrast not only between the city of time and the city of eternity but also between what is and what ought to be the nature of the world in which we live. For in this world as well as in the world to come God is our highest good.[2] He is the virtue and wisdom which the soul seeks,[3] "the perfection of all our good things and our perfect good," [4] "the fountain of our happiness, the end of all our desires." [5] The *summum bonum,* then, about which philosophers have so long and so keenly contended "is nothing else than to be united to God." [1]

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[1] De civ. dei XIV, XXVIII. Cf. Ibid XV, VII; XIV, XIII; XIII, XX.

[2] Ibid XII, I; VIII, VIII; X, I-IV; X, XIV; XII, I; De trin. I, X, 20; I, XIII, 3; VIII, III, 4; XIII, VII, 10; De moribus eccl. cath. XI, 18; XIV, 24; Enarr. in Ps. LXXVIII, 20; De serm. dom. in monte II, XVI, 53; De pecc. meritis et remiss. II, V, 8; De spir. et litt. XXI-XXII, 36-37; Conf. I, V, 5; II, I, 1; II, VI, 12.

[3] De moribus eccl. cath. VI, 9.

[4] Ibid VIII, 13. Cf. Conf. I, VI, 7.

[5] De civ. dei X, III. Cf. Ibid X, XVIII.

From this it follows that nothing is to be loved but God. Only goodness is good and only God is goodness. All the things and creatures of this world may be used "as far as may suffice for the needs of this life and its duties," but they must be used with moderation and not with affection.[2]

To be sure, nothing in the world is evil. The body, for example, is both good and beautiful and as such should be cared for wisely and within due limits.[3] On the other hand, the body is to be used and not enjoyed. To enjoy anything is "to rest with satisfaction in it for its own sake. To use . . . is to employ whatever means are at one's disposal to obtain what one desires if it is a proper object of desire." [4]

There is, however, no sin in the pleasure that accompanies the proper use of temporal creatures and things. There is pleasure in eating and drinking, pleasure in the relations between men and women, pleasure in the appreciation of beauty. There is no evil in this until it is preferred to virtue, or in other words, unless the pleasure is occasioned by the desire of these earthly things for their own sake.[5] Even the so-called virtues should not be pursued as ends in themselves. Continence, for instance, is praiseworthy in a Christian but wicked in an unbeliever, for it is good only "when it is practiced in the faith of the highest good, that is, God." [1]

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[1] De civ. dei X, III.

[2] De moribus eccl. cath. XXI, 39.

[3] De doctr. christ. I, XXIV-XXV, 24-26.

[4] Ibid I, IV, 4.

[5] De civ. dei XIX, I. The desire for transient things is called cupidity, the desire for eternal things is love. Cf. De div. quaest.

Our life is to be understood, then, as a journey to God in which we use the material and temporal in order to reach the spiritual and eternal.[2] Since, moreover, God is the sole object of love, every virtue is a form of love for God. Temperance is "love keeping itself entire and incorrupt for God." Fortitude is "love bearing everything readily for the sake of God." Prudence is "love making a right distinction between what helps it towards God and what might hinder it." Justice is "love serving God only, and therefore ruling well all else, as subject to man." [3]

Virtues, however, have to do only with the love of God in the right use of temporal things. They are concerned only with action and the control of things subject to motion and change. They depend, moreover, on knowledge, for "nothing at all can be loved which is not known." [4] Since, however, above knowledge (*scientia*) may be distinguished wisdom (*sapientia*), the contemplation of God, which is wisdom,

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LXXXIII, Qu. XXXIII; De trin. XII, VIII, 13; XII, X, 15; XII, XII, 17; XII, XIV, 21-23; XII, XV, 25; XIV, I, 3.

[1] De civ. dei XV, XX. Cf. Ibid XVI, XXXVI.

[2] De doctr. christ. I, IV, 4.

[3] De moribus eccl. cath. XV, 25. Cf. De civ. dei XXII, XXIV.

[4] De trin. X, II, 4. Cf. Ibid XII, XIV, 27.

is to be desired above all the virtues as the highest happiness and bliss. It is this, then, that "is held forth to us as the end of all actions and the everlasting fullness of joy," [1] "the full enjoyment of the highest and truest good." [2]

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[1] De trin. I, VIII, 17. Cf. Ibid I, X, 20; I, XII, 22; I, XIII, 31; De div. quaest. LXXXIII, Qu. XLVI, 2.

[2] De quant. animae XXXIII, 76.

# CHAPTER VIII

## THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY

AUGUSTINE never tires of reminding his readers that the unaided reason is powerless to learn the real nature of God. Reason can tell us, he says, that God is, but what he is we can know only through faith and revelation. Faith, then, must always precede reason. We must "purge our minds, in order to be able to see ineffably that which is ineffable; whereto not having yet attained, we are to be nourished by faith, and led by such ways as are more suited to our capacity, that we may be rendered apt and able to comprehend it."[1]

The truth of this becomes the more apparent as we consider the methods used by rationalists in attempting to define deity without appeal to revelation. There are but three methods available to such men, that of applying a material yardstick to things spiritual, that of measuring the divine mind by the human and finite, and that of defining God by transcending the whole world of created being and severing all connections with the corporeal and spiritual orders.

The first method reduces God to a body and thus may even speak of him as being red or white in color. The second regards him as a magnified man and thus may even speak of him as remembering or forgetting. Both of these methods fail because they rest on a fundamental misconception of God's nature. They do not realize that their crude measuring sticks are quite unable to give us accurate dimensions of deity. To use such methods as these is like weighing a poem by a set of apothecaries' weights, or judging an oil portrait by a test designed for cheese. Redness and whiteness exist, of course, and remembering and forgetting are daily facts of human experience, but no corporeal or anthropomorphic terms will unveil the mysteries of the divine substance.

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[1] De trin. I, I, 3.

The third method used by those who are "deceived by a crude and perverse love of reason" [1] is not properly a method of reason at all, for it is an attempt to discover the nature of God by turning its back on the only world it knows. Thus it may attribute to God such a power as that of self-generation, forgetting that reason itself declares that nothing can generate its own existence.[2] This transcendental method is even more susceptible to error than the method of materialism or anthropomorphism, for it gives full licence to the imagination and admits of no refutation by reason.

It is evident that all three methods, if unaided by

[1] De trin. I, I, 1.

[2] Ibid.

faith and revelation, are wholly inadequate to describe deity. If we are ever to know God as he really is it will be through faith in the revealed doctrines of Christianity. Since it is the Bible which contains these, nothing is to be believed concerning God except on the authority of the Scriptures.

It is true, of course, that the Bible is guilty of using all three of the methods we have criticized. It uses, for example, such corporeal figures as "Hide me under the shadow of Thy wings." [1] and such anthropomorphic expressions as "I the Lord thy God am a jealous God."[2] Examples of the transcendental method are more rare, but appear in such sayings as "I am that I am" and "I am hath sent me to you." [3] Divine inspiration justifies the use of the third method, while the first two are never used in any literal sense. Corporeal or anthropomorphic figures are intended only as symbols and not as literal facts. St. Paul explains their use in his letter to the Corinthians where he says, "And I brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able." [4] It is permissible, then, to use these lower figures until such time as we are so strengthened in faith that our

[1] Psalm XVII, 8.

[2] Exodus XX, 5.

[3] Ibid III, 14.

[4] First Corinthians III, 1-2.

understandings are able to rise from the material and human to the spiritual and divine.[1]

The Bible reveals God to be a trinity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, three persons who are one and the same substance or essence.[2] They are not three Gods but one, since the three persons enjoy "a divine unity of one and the same substance in an indivisible equality." [3] The unity of the three persons is, however, not to be so understood as to destroy the distinctions within the God-head, for, says Augustine, "the Father hath begotten the Son, and so he who is the Father is not the Son; and the Son is begotten by the Father, and so he who is the Son is not the Father; and the Holy Spirit is neither the Father nor the Son but only the Spirit of the Father and of the Son." [4] That these distinctions are real may be seen in the fact that only the Son was born of Mary and suffered on the cross, that only the Holy Spirit appeared in the form of a dove, at the time of Jesus' baptism and again under the form of a mighty wind on the day of Pentecost, and that only the Father declared of Jesus, "Thou art my Son," [5] and at another time, "I have both glorified it and will glorify it again." [6]

In his exposition of the doctrine Augustine attempts to steer a middle course between Sabellianism and Arianism. He believes the Sabellians are wrong in denying the reality of the distinctions in the Godhead, and the Arians in declaring the Son to be different in nature as well as in person from the other members of the trinity.[1] There are, insists Augustine, three persons, each of whom may be distinguished from the others, yet all of whom are equal and inseparable since they have but one nature or essence.[2]

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[1] De trin. I, I, 3.

[2] Ibid I, II, 4.

[3] Ibid I, IV, 7.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Mark I, 11.

[6] John XII, 28.

Whether we call the trinity one essence or substance and three persons, as does the Latin Church or one essence and three hypostases as does the Greek Church, the distinction expressed is the same. In both cases the words attempt to set forth the reality of the distinctions within the divine being while also insisting on their unity, equality and inseparability.[3] Regardless of the terminology used the names "did not intend diversity to be meant, but singleness to be denied." [4]

Augustine approaches the problem of the distinctions in the trinity not by examining the nature of

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[1] In Joan. evang., Tr. XXXVII, 6.

[2] There is a sense in which Augustine recognizes the subordination of the Son to the Father, for he admits that the filial relationship is of lesser dignity than the paternal. Since, however, their essence or nature is the same, there is no metaphysical subordination. Cf. De trin. I, VII, 14; I, XI, 22; II, IV, 6; III, Preface, 3; IV, XX, 29; V, XIV, 15; V, XIII, 14; Epist. CLXIX, II, 5; De fide et symbolo IX, 16; IX, 18; In Joan. evang., Tr. XX, 3; XX, 8; XXXI, 9; LXX, 1; LXXI, 2; CX, 1.

[3] De trin. V, VIII-IX, 9-10. Cf. Ibid VII, IV-V, 7-10.

[4] Ibid VII, IV, 9.

God the Father as the source of the other two persons, but by studying the divine nature itself.[1] This study shows him that it is not one thing for God to be and another to be wise or good.[2] As supreme being he is of necessity also supreme wisdom and supreme goodness, his very nature being that of a trinity in an indivisible unity.

Augustine is very reluctant to apply the word substance to God since God has no accidents.[3] He is not subject to his own attributes, but rather, what he has he is.[4] Whatever distinctions, then, may be observed in God are distinctions of relations and not of accidents.[5] In other words, the Father may be called Father only in relation to the Son; the Son may be called Son only in relation to the Father; the Holy Spirit only in relation to the Father and the Son.[6]

The trinity is absolutely simple "because it has not anything which it can lose, and because it is not one thing and its contents another, as a cup and the liquor, or a body and its color, or the air and the light and the heat of it, or a mind and its wisdom. For none of these is what it has: the cup is not liquor, nor the body color, nor the air light and heat, nor the mind wisdom. And hence they can be deprived of what they have and can be turned or changed into other qualities and states, so that the cup may be emptied of the liquid of which it is full, the body be discolored, the air darken, the mind grow silly." [1]

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[1] Cf. F. Caryré, Precis de Patrologie, Tome I, Paris, 1927, p. 657.

[2] De trin. VI, VI-VII, 8-9. Cf. Ibid V, X, 11; XV, V, 7-8; Sermo CCCXLI, VI, 8.

[3] Ibid VII, V, 10. Cf. Ibid VII, I, 1.

[4] In Joan. evang., Tr. XLVIII, 6.

[5] De trin. V, V, 6.

[6] Ibid V, XI, 12.

Because the trinity is simple it follows that each part is as great as the whole. "The Father alone, or the Son alone, or the Holy Spirit alone, is as great as the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit together." [2] In the trinity is the source of all existence, God the Father, the source of all knowledge, God the Son, and the source of all goodness, God the Holy Spirit. Each of the three is infinite and is therefore "as much as the three together, nor are two anything more than one." [3]

Each member of the trinity may be predicated relatively but all are "marvelously inseparable from one another." [4] No member of the Godhead acts without the others, for "Wherever anyone of them is, there also is the Trinity, One God." [5] You cannot separate the Son from the Father any more than you can separate the brightness from the sun, or the light from a lamp flame. "One small, slender flame of a lamp, which can be extinguished by one breath, spreads its light over all that lies near it: thou seest the light generated by the flame spread out; thou seest its emission, but not a separation."[1] So "the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost are inseparably united in themselves . . . . this trinity is one God (and) . . . all the works of the one God are the works of the Father, Son and of the Holy Ghost."[2]

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[1] De civ. dei XI, X.

[2] De trin. VI, VIII, 9. Cf. Ibid VII, VI, 11.

[3] Ibid VI, X, 12.

[4] Ibid IX, V, 8.

[5] In Joan. evang., Tr. XVIV, 5. Cf. Ibid XCV, 1.

Augustine does not intend, however, to deny the reality of the separate appearances of the individual members of the trinity. As God the three persons are inseparable, but as persons within the trinity they may be clearly distinguished. This enables Augustine to maintain that while the Father was always with the Son, the Son alone hung on the cross and suffered the pain of crucifixion.[3] It is seldom, however, that he insists on such an absolute distinction between the three persons. His doctrine as a whole is that the individual members of the trinity "can be distinguished in thought, but are inseparable in action."[4]

There is nothing particularly striking or original in Augustine's exposition of the doctrine of the trinity as he finds it revealed in the Holy Scriptures. It is simply an unusually clear statement of the orthodox Christian faith concerning the nature of God. When, however, he subjects the doctrine to an examination by reason [1] and indicates its philosophic significance he shows the full measure of his mental stature. Augustine was never under any misapprehension as to the intellectual difficulties and self-contradictions of the Christian view of the trinity. He is fully aware that although the doctrine can be made to appear reasonable its nature is not such as to convince an unbelieving mind. One must first accept it on faith and then seek to understand it. It is enough for Augustine if he can demonstrate its rationality to those who already believe in its truth.

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[1] In Joan. evang., Tr. XX, 13.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid XXXVI, 8.

[4] "Unde probemus esse aliqua tria, quae tria separabiliter proferantur, inseparabiliter operentur." Sermo LII, V, 15. Cf. De trin. XV, VII, 12.

We have had an example of how he does this in his treatment of the various attributes of God.[2] We observed that whatever be the ascriptions to deity Augustine shows that they can always be reduced to three. Even apart from the authority of the divine books it is evident that the creator must be placed above created things as that which "lives in the highest sense and perceives and understands all things." And even if nothing is worthily said of God by human speech it is clear that he is a spirit and not a body, immortal, incorruptible, eternal, unchangeable, and of all things the most powerful, most wise, most beautiful, most good, and most blessed.[3] When these attributes are analyzed we find we can express them all in three, namely, eternal, wise, and blessed.[1] In the absolutely simple nature of God, however, eternity, wisdom and blessedness are one and the same thing. It is not one thing for God to be and another to be wise and still another to be blessed, for in order to be in the highest sense he must also be blessed and wise.[2] When, therefore, we think of God even according to our natural reason we must recognize that while he is one being he is at the same time a trinity of eternal existence, perfect wisdom and supreme blessedness. Other combinations of attributes are, of course, possible, but they are bound to be combinations of three and therefore offer but cumulative proof that whatever be our description of deity, it must be that of a trinity of powers or attributes in one being.[3]

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[1] In the fifteen books of the De trinitate the first seven are devoted to an examination of the doctrine as contained in the Bible, the next seven to a rational examination and exposition and the last book to a summary of the whole.

[2] Cf. pp. 104-105.

[3] De trin. XV, IV-V, 6-8.

We have, moreover, many evidences of the triune nature of God in the vestiges or traces of himself he has left in his work. There is a significance, for example, in the fact that every substance exhibits these three things, "first, that it *is;* next, that it is *this* or *that;* and third, that so far as possible it *remains* as it is. The first of these three presents the original cause of nature from which all things exist; the second presents the form according to which all things are fashioned and formed in a particular way; the third presents a certain permanence, so to speak, in which all things are." [1] Although each of these may be distinguished from the others, the three are inseparable and therefore remind us of the trinity in the divine being in which three persons may be distinguished while remaining inseparable.

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[1] Aeternus, sapiens, beatus. De trin. XV, IV-V, 6-8.

[2] Ibid. Cf. XV, VI, 9.

[3] The combination of attributes changes from "aeternitas, sapientia and beatitudo." (De trin. XV, VI, 91) to "qui summe est, qui summe sapiens est, and qui summe bonus est." (De civ. dei XI, XXVIII) ; "vera aeternitas, aeterna veritas, and aeterna and vera charitas" (Ibid) ; "aeternitas, veritas, and voluntas" (De trin. IV, Proem., 1) ; "aeternitas, veritas, and beatitudo" (Ibid IV, I, 2) ; and "origo rerum omnium, perfectissima pulchritudo, et beatissima delectatio" (Ibid VI, X, 12.) The formulas "aeternitas, species and usus" (De trin. VI, X, 11) and "Pater, Imago and Munus" (Ibid) are also applied to God by Augustine. They are, however, borrowed from Hilary (De trin., Book II) and are of a somewhat different order.

We have another suggestion of the trinity in the fact that nothing can exist without unity, form and order.[2] Order, for example, is that which contributes organization, arrangement and a certain uniformity. There can be no order, however, without unity of form. So important indeed is unity that we can say that existence is nothing else but being one. "Thus," says Augustine, "in so far as anything acquires unity, so far it exists. For uniformity and harmony are the effects of unity, and by these compound things exist in as far as they have existence."[1] The same thing can be said of the importance of form, for form is the number without which nothing can exist.[2] Everything, then, "is both some one thing, as are the several natures of bodies and dispositions of souls; and is fashioned in some form, as are the figures or qualities of bodies, and the various learning or skill of souls; and seeks or preserves a certain order, as are the several weights or combinations of bodies and the loves or delights of souls."[3] While this is not to be understood as an image of the trinity it does remind us of him who is the perfect unity and highest form and supreme order and it indicates how distinctions are possible between persons that exist inseparably in one nature or substance.

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[1] Epist. XI, 3. Cf. "aliud est quo constat, aliud quo discernitur, aliud quo congruit" and "qua sit, qua hoc sit, qua sibi amica sit." De div. quaest. LXXXIII, Qu. XVIII.

[2] De vera relig. VII, 13; De trin. VI, X, 12. The "unitas, species, ordo" of this combination changes to that of "modus, species, ordo" (De nat. boni contra Man. III) and "modo essent, specie continerentur, ordinem appeterent." (De civ. dei XI, XXVIII.)

We can discern many such suggestions of the trinity in created things. We observe, for example, that everything has a number, a weight and a measure and yet remains one despite these distinctions.[4] We see that the same water "may be in view at one time under the appellation of the fountain, and at another under that of the river and at a third under that of a draught,"[5] or to state the same truth more simply, three cups of the same water may be filled from one fountain.[1] Again, we note that in a tree the root is not to be confused with the trunk or the branches, and that although the distinctions between these three parts must be carefully observed, they are all of the same wood and together form but one tree.[2]

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[1] De moribus Man. VI, 8. Cf. De gen. ad Litt., imperf. lib. XVI, 59; De vera relig. XXXII, 60; XXXIV, 63.

[2] De lib. arb. II, XVI, 42.

[3] De trin. VI, X, 12.

[4] Ibid XI, XI, 18.

[5] De fide et symbolo IX, 17.

The most suggestive of all the traces of deity are found in man himself, for man is the highest of earthly creatures and is indeed the only creature made in the image of God. If we consider our own natures we are reminded at once of the trinity by the fact that we are, we know and we will—and yet we are one.[3] Or to change the figure slightly, "we both have existence and know that we have existence and delight in our existence and our knowledge of it."[4] We observe, moreover, the need of three things in ourselves, nature or capacity for growth, knowledge and skill, education or knowledge, and practice or use of our nature and our education.[5] This threefold need corresponds to the three sides of our nature, the natural or physical, the intellectual or logical, and the moral or ethical. This, however, is not only a statement of the three aspects of man but also of the three aspects of reality, and it is because of this that the philosophers have found but three divisions of science, namely, physics, logic and ethics.

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[1] De fide et symbols IX, 17.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Conf. XIII, XI, 12.

[4] De civ. dei XI, XXVI. Cf. De trin. IX, IV, 5.

[5] Ibid XI, XXV.

This threefold division of reality is, then, the most significant of all our clues thus far to the nature of God. If nature itself is revealed under three forms and only three, it is no wonder that even Plato, although unfamiliar, of course, with the doctrine of the trinity, saw that God must have a threefold aspect, since he alone is "the author of nature, the bestower of intelligence, and the kindler of love by which life becomes good and blessed." [1]

In the light of this insight let us turn again to a study of our own natures to see whether there are not still other suggestions of the trinity which may be discovered by reason. As we scrutinize the nature of the outer man we see nothing that we would dare call an image of God but we do see two vestiges which help us to understand his nature. The first is a certain trinity in vision, since we can distinguish in the vision of any corporeal object, "first, the object itself which we see, whether a stone or flame or any other visible thing (and this certainly might already exist before it was seen) ; next, vision or the act of seeing, which did not exist before we perceived the object itself which is presented to the sense; in the third place, that which keeps the sense of the eye in the object seen, so long as it is seen, *viz.* the attention of the mind." [2] These three may be clearly distinguished from one another not only because of the properties of each but also because of the diversity of their natures. The visible body is of a different nature from the sense of the eyes, since the former is separable while the latter belongs inseparably to the nature of the living subject. The purely mental act of the mind may also be distinguished from the corporeal object and the bodily sense or corporeal instrument by which "the soul commingled with the body perceives." [1] Nevertheless, these three things, diverse as they are in nature, "are tempered into a kind of unity; that is, the form of the body which is seen, and the image of it impressed on the sense, which is vision or sense informed, and the will of the mind which applies the sense to the sensible thing, and retains the vision itself in it." [2] In this unity, the object whose form is reproduced in the sense reminds us of the Father, the image in the sense, the Son, and the will uniting the object and the sense, the Holy Spirit.

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[1] De civ. dei XI, XXV. Cf. Ibid VIII, IV.

[2] "Ipsa res quam videmus . . . visio . . . animi intentio." De trin. XI, II, 2.

The unity of these three is, however, by no means to be likened unto the unity of the divine trinity. It is not until we pass from the trinity found in perception to that found in conception that we find a real unity. In conception we see a likeness of the body that was corporeally perceived remaining in the memory, "to which the will may again direct its eye, so as to be formed thence from within, as the sense was formed without by the presentation of the sensible body." In this trinity of memory, internal vision, and the will uniting them, there is not the diversity of substance noted in the former analogy.[1]

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[1] De trin. XI, II, 2.

[2] Ibid XI, II, 5.

On the other hand, even here we do not have a trinity worthy to be called a genuine image of God, "since it is produced in the mind itself through the bodily sense, from the lowest, that is, the corporeal creature, than which the mind is higher." [2]

All of the analogies that may be observed either in creatures in general or in the outer or sensible man are corporeal. Since, however, any true description of deity must be in terms that are purely spiritual, the trinities which we have discerned thus far are simply faint traces of deity and not true likenesses. They are sufficiently like God so that we may say that he has not left himself without a witness in the world of created things, but they are only faint resemblances, just as earthly existence itself but dimly resembles the existence of him who alone truly is.

Every created thing bears at least a faint mark of the principle from which it has received its being.[3] This does not mean, however, that what is true of created things is also true of the uncreated God or that in speaking of God we can use words in the same sense that they are used in speaking of things.[1] Apart from revelation, man has no way of coming to a knowledge of God except from a consideration of the nature of created things. On the other hand, the chasm between the world and deity is so immeasurable that whatever knowledge is gained in this way is at best incomplete and uncertain.

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[1] De trin. XI, III, 6. Augustine distinguishes still another trinity of this kind in the holding, contemplating and loving of temporal faith. Cf. Ibid XIV, II, 4.

[2] Ibid XI, V, 8.

[3] These marks of deity fall in three classes, shadows, vestiges and images.

The Bible, however, declares that God made man in his own image. If, then, we are willing to trust the divine authority of the Scriptures we ought to find in man not only the shadows and vestiges of deity observed in the world of things but also a real image. Such an image would not, of course, be found in the sensible man but only in the spiritual or rational soul.[2]

Augustine finds several such images[3] of which three are particularly worthy of mention. The first is the trinity that may be discerned by distinguishing the knowledge and love of the mind from the mind itself. The mind itself may be likened to the Father, the knowledge of the mind to the Son, and the love of the mind and its knowledge to the Spirit of the Father and the Son. In these three each may be distinguished from the others and predicated relatively, yet when they are perfect they are all equal.[1] Since, moreover, "the mind loves itself as a whole and knows itself as a whole and knows its own love wholly and loves its own knowledge wholly, when these things are perfect in respect to themselves "we see that they exist marvellously inseparable from one another." [2]

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[1] Cf. Étienne Gilson, Introduction a l'Étude de Saint Augustin. p. 280-281.

[2] De trin. XIV, IV, 6. Cf. Enarr. in Ps. XLII, 6.

[3] "esse . . . intelligere . . . vivere" (Ibid VI, X, 11); "mens . . . notitia . . . amor" (Ibid IX, II-V, 2-8); "memoria . . . intelligentia . . . voluntas" (Ibid X, XI-XII, 17-19). (Cf. Sermo LII, VII, 18; Epist. CLXIX, II, 6); "ingenium . . . doctrina . . . usus" (Ibid X, XI, 17); "memoria (de Deo) intellectio (Dei) . . . amor (in Deum)" (Ibid XIV, VIII, 11-12; XIV, XII, 15). Cf. E. Portalie, art. Augustin, Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique.

The second trinity is that found in the unity of man's memory, understanding and will.[3] Here, as in all the analogies, we must remember that God does not have a mind like ours and that the words memory, understanding and will are not to be understood in any mere anthropomorphic sense. Nevertheless, we do have in this image a true if imperfect reflection to the three persons in the Godhead.[4]

Augustine is convinced that even if man's reason be defaced and worn the image of God still remains. "For," he says, "it is his image in this very point, that it is capable of him and can be partaker of him; which so great good is only made possible by its being His image."[1] When, therefore, we distinguish the mind remembering from the mind understanding and the mind loving itself we behold a third image of the trinity, which, like the first two, is not God himself, but is nevertheless a real image of God.[2] This trinity is, however, not an image of the divine being "because the mind remembers itself and understands and loves itself; but because it can also remember, understand and love Him by whom it was made."[3]

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[1] De trin. IX, IV, 4-6. [2] Ibid IX, V, 8.

[3] To this there corresponds another trinity, namely, of ability, knowledge and use. Ibid X, XI, 17. Cf. "Haec igitur tria: memoria, intelligentia, voluntas, quoniam non sunt tres vitae, sed una vita, nec tres mentes, sed una, consequenter utique nec tres substantiae sunt, sed una substantia." Ibid X, XI, 18.

[4] Ibid. Cf. Sermo LII, VII, 18; Epist. CLXIX, II, 6.

In doing this man not only finds that the doctrine he has accepted on faith is now made acceptable to his understanding, but he also learns the meaning of life and the nature of happiness and wisdom. He sees that without the Father's sustaining power he could not exist at all, without the Son's illumination he could have no wisdom, and without the grace of the Holy Spirit he could have no goodness. In remembering, understanding and loving God is, then, the highest level of human existence. Only in the knowledge of God does man find wisdom; only in the love of God does he become good; only in the contemplation of God does he find perfect and abiding happiness.

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[1] De trin. XIV, VIII, 11.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid XIV, XII, 15.

# KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|---|---|
| Acta seu disput. contra Fortunatum Man. | Acta seu disputatio contra Fortunatum Manichaeum |
| Conf. | Confessionum |
| Contra Acad. | Contra Academicos |
| Contra Adimant. Man. discip. | Contra Adimantum Manichaei discipulum |
| Contra advers. legis et prophet. | Contra adversarium legis et prophetarum |
| Contra duas epist. Pelag. | Contra duas epistolas Pelagianorum ad Bonifacium |
| Contra epist. Man. quam voc. fund. | Contra epistolam Manichaei quam vocant fundamenti |
| Contra Faustum Man. | Contra Faustum Manichaeum |
| Contra Julianum haeresis Pelag. defens. | Contra Julianum haeresis Pelagianae defensorem |
| Contra Maximum Arian. episc. | Contra Maximum Arianorum episcopum |
| De baptismo contra Don. | De baptismo contra Donatistas |
| De catechiz. rudibus | De catechizandis rudibus |
| De civ. dei | De civitate dei |
| De cons. evang. | De consensu evangelistarum |
| De corrept. et gratia | De correptione et gratia |
| De div. quaest. ad Simpl. | De diversis quaestionibus ad Simplicianum |
| De div. quaest. LXXXIII | De diversis quaestionibus LXXXIII |
| De doctr. christ. | De doctrina christiana |
| De dono persever. | De dono perseverantiae |
| De duabus animabus contra Man. | De duabus animabus contra Manichaeos |

| | |
|---|---|
| De fide re. quae non vid. | De fide rerum quae non videntur |
| De Gen. ad litt. | De Genesi ad litteram |
| De Gen. ad litt., lib. imperf. | De Genesi ad litteram, liber imperfectus |
| De Gen. contra Man. | De Genesi contra Manichaeos |
| De gratia et lib. arb. | De gratia et libero arbitrio ad Valentinum et cum illo monachors Adrumetinos |
| De immort. animae | De immortalitate animae |
| De lib. arb. | De libero arbitrio |
| De moribus eccl. cath. | De moribus ecclesiae catholicae |
| De moribus Man. | De moribus Manichaeorum |
| De nat. boni contra Man. | De natura boni contra Manichaeos |
| De nat. et gratia | De natura et gratia contra Pelagium ad Timasium et Jacobum |
| De nuptiis et concupisc. | De nuptiis et concupiscentia |
| De pecc. meritis et remiss. | De peccatorum meritis et remissione ad Valerium |
| De praedest. sanct. | De praedestinatione sanctorum |
| De quant. animae | De quantitate animae |
| De serm. dom. in monte | De sermone domini in monte |
| De spir. et litt. | De spiritu et littera |
| De symbolo ad Catech. | De symbolo ad Catechumenos |
| De trin. | De trinitate |
| De util. cred. | De utilitate credendi ad Honoratum |
| De vera relig. | De vera religione |
| Enarr. in Ps. | Enarratio in Psalmum |
| Enchiridion | Enchiridion de Fide, Spe et Charitate |
| Epist. | Epistola |
| Epist. ad Rom. inchoata expos. | Epistolae ad Romanos inchoata expositio |
| In epist. Joan. ad Parthos. | In epistolam Joannis ad Parthos |
| In Joan. evang. | In Joannis evangelium |

| | |
|---|---|
| Operis imperf. contra Julianum | Operis imperfecti contra Julianum |
| Retract. | Retractationum |
| Solil. | Soliloquiorum |

| | |
|---|---|
| Lib. | Liber |
| Tractatus | Tr. |

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